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GENERAL EDITOR : MICHAEL OAKESHOTT

MAY 1953

A. A. PARKER

The Roots of the Spanish Dilemma

HERBERT BUTTERFIELD

Lord Acton

R. G. FURNIVAL

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THE ROOTS OF THE SPANISH DILEMMA

A. A. PARKER

Mais que doit-on à l'Espagne? Et depuis deux siècles, depuis quatre, depuis dix, qu'a-t-elle fait pour l'Europe?—*Encyclopédie Méthodique* (1782).

All writing ceased [in Spain] from the moment the Inquisition was established—(Report of the Committee on the Suppression of the Inquisition to the Cádiz Parliament, 1810).

Cast a rapid glance round the face of our Peninsular after the Inquisition was established, and you will see that ever since that unhappy epoch we have been without useful sciences, agriculture, crafts, industry and commerce . . . For how long are we to remain the laughing-stock of the nations?—(Speech in the Cádiz Parliament, 1810).

Suppose for a moment, though it may grieve you even to imagine such a thing, that you are a Spaniard. Don't get alarmed: this is only a supposition.—Larra: *Tercera carta de un liberal de acá a un liberal de allá* (1835).

There is nothing more frightening, more abominable, than that great Spanish Empire, which was a shroud wound round the globe . . . We have no agriculture because we expelled the *moriscos* . . . We have no industry because we expelled the Jews.—Castelar (Parliamentary Speech 1869).

This, then, is the land of Spain. I have raised my eyes and seen the scraggy trees and the houses, the bushes, agaves and cactuses in the brown-red and wretched soil, all covered with the dust raised by the wandering beggars as they pass along the roads . . . and I have felt within me, as my only reaction to all this, a deep and helpless disgust . . . I can't continue. Leave me alone now. Whether there is still any civic salvation for this people I don't know, nor do I want to know at this moment.—Maragall: *La espaciosa y triste España* (1911).

1

It is an over-simplification to limit an analysis of the Spanish political situation and its genesis to considerations of a political, economic and social nature, or indeed to take it for granted that Spain fits easily into place in the general political pattern of present-day Europe. The question of religious belief, and of the institutional and social forms that this belief requires, operates in the political sphere more strongly in Spain than elsewhere (in ways which, incidentally, are not at all easy for the average Englishman to understand). None the less, even the addition of this complicating factor still does not completely illuminate the loves and hates that move Spaniards to embrace one set of political ideas rather than the other. If the foreign inquirer focuses his gaze on the situation to which the above quotations point, he will see the scope of what Spaniards themselves have for long been calling 'the problem of Spain'. For behind the political issues at any given moment there

have lain, and there still lie, problems — intellectual, emotional, moral — which, for Spaniards, are involved in the fact that they are Spaniards.

Several contemporary European nations are the victims of a historical consciousness. The memory of the national past may not only colour or blur a specific political issue so that its true outlines are hidden, it may even create a whole policy which the circumstances of the present, considered in isolation, would never justify. No benefit was brought to Italy when, with complete irrelevance to her position in the world, she revived memories of Imperial Rome. The resentment at the Treaty of Versailles was further fed in many Germans by the thought that the Thirty Years War had robbed Germany for centuries of her right to march at the head of Europe; in Hitler, at least, knowledge of this particular period of German history seems to have produced an obsession. The Irishman's long historical memory may be a proverbial joke in England, but in Ireland it helped to create a partition which is only perpetuated by its protests. Perhaps all European nations have, at one time or another, allowed their past to determine their future in ways that have been contrary to their interests. Spain is part of this general phenomenon, but her case shows certain special features. Historical consciousness, in her, has not led to a specific line of political action or development, but by arousing strong feelings and tugging them in opposite directions it has greatly accentuated the natural opposition between conservatism and radicalism. By setting Spaniards at loggerheads it has, in effect, hitherto prevented them from embarking consistently on any line of political development. Haunted by the ghost of the past, Spain has become, to a large extent, the victim of self-frustration.

The ghost is the contrast between former imperial greatness and present insignificance, a ghost that haunts with a distressing consciousness of 'decadence' and a gnawing sense of historical 'guilt'. Already in the seventeenth century there was, of course, an awareness of decline and something of an examination of conscience, but the self-accusation remained principally on the moral plane: soft living had made citizens spineless and rulers blind to their responsibility. There was at that time no suggestion that Spain had taken a wrong turning while the rest of Europe had wisely remained along the right road to progress. The eighteenth century, however, was able to produce this particular simplification, and certain Spaniards began to argue, roughly, as follows. Spain had neither the political power nor the economic prosperity of France; she had few scholars, fewer economists and no engineers; Paris had a refined and polite society, Madrid had an unlettered populace that booted off the stage the tragedies written according to the authoritative French interpretation

of the precepts of the Ancients. Yet Spain had once appeared to be in the forefront of civilization. What had gone wrong? The deliberate tightening, during the sixteenth century, of the shackles of medievalism round her flesh; namely, the subservience of State to Church, of reason to dogma, and the choice of the Inquisition rather than freedom: the results were obscurantist intolerance and religious and racial persecution, which had left permanent marks on Spain in the form of economic impoverishment and the ignorance of her people. No nation could in such conditions produce any culture or make any valuable contribution to the life of humanity. If, then, a foreigner asked 'What does the world owe to Spain?' every enlightened Spaniard was compelled to answer 'Nothing'. Any other answer was a refusal to face the patriotic task of national reform and resurgence. Commissioned by the Spanish government to write a reply to the article in the *Encyclopédie Méthodique*, Forner published in 1786 his *Discourse in Defence of Spain and the Merits of her Literature*. A leading Spanish journal immediately parodied this under the title *Discourse in Defence of Africa*, and a prominent citizen of Madrid accused the government of fanning anti-French feeling by sponsoring Forner's 'impertinent' work. The literary polemic that this gave rise to, if it did not create the awareness of 'the problem of Spain' and produce the two sides to debate it, was at least the occasion when it first emerged into the open as a theme of passionate controversy.

There were not wanting reasonable, well-educated and moderate men among the apostles of reform, but the chaotic circumstances of the Napoleonic invasion gave the extremists the unexpected opportunity of action, and the liberal era dawned in Spain not under the guidance of men like Jovellanos but under the banner proclaiming the absence of any culture and intellectual life during the previous three centuries: 'All writing ceased from the moment the Inquisition was established'. Throughout the nineteenth century this fantastic statement sparkled as a new constellation in the Spanish political sky, and all radical and republican groups were born under its sign and endowed with a sanguine humour which they considered European and progressive, but which their opponents considered blasphemous treason to the mother that had borne them.

Real differences over important political issues certainly divided the conservative and radical groups, but these differences were invariably coloured — generally without relevance to the immediate question, and of necessity more emotionally than dispassionately — by contempt or admiration for their country and its past. Once the basic issue was placed on the level of history interpreted exclusively in terms of religious intolerance, those Spaniards whose patriotic instincts impelled them to defend the honour of Spain equated her

political and cultural greatness in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, not only with the religious faith that Spaniards then professed, but also with the close alliance between Church and State. Both sides started from the same premise, that Spain was 'decadent'; and both chafed against this fact because history taught them that it had once been otherwise. But whereas the Left, in their humiliation with the present, attacked and repudiated the past that had produced it, the Right,¹ equally humiliated with the present, turned to the past in order to find reasons for being proud of their nationality — the present was what it was because it had deviated from the past, because some Spaniards had turned their backs on the national traditions and had gone a-whoring after the strange gods of free-thought, irreligion and materialism.

It is not distorting the general tenor of at least one famous parliamentary debate in the last century to state that the absence of good roads was attributed to the fact that Spain's citizens believed in the Trinity and admired Philip II. Such assumptions, usually less crudely framed, underlay the political division. Constitutional reforms and the material welfare of the country were rarely questions of here and now practicability, but were too often raised to a plane where reason found it difficult to keep its footing, where passions ran high, and where the wider issues at stake were of such a nature that practical solutions were not easy to come by. Two long civil wars, countless revolutions, military interventions without number, six constitutions, the fall of a dynasty, a new dynasty, a republic, a restoration of the first dynasty — all these followed one after the other, until in the last two decades of the century social peace and stability could only be purchased by the sacrifice of constitutional honesty. Cánovas did not pay this price with light-hearted cynicism; he was compelled to pay it out of responsibility to his duty of governing a country whose politics throughout his life-time had turned him into a profound pessimist. War with the United States brought the century to a close in defeat without honour. Never had the prestige of Spain sunk so low, not least in the eyes of her own sons.

2

The preoccupation with the problem of national 'decadence' which had been a constant feature of Spanish life for over a century,

¹ I use the terms Left and Right because their comprehensiveness enables me to bring together under one unambiguous label the different groups which at any one time made up either of the two 'sides'. The two terms are universally used in Spain itself, and the phrase 'the two Spains' has wide currency. It is important to make it clear that however politically heterogeneous either 'Spain' was or is in the party sense, the groups comprising each have always had certain fundamental ideas and 'attitudes' in common. The party alliances in the Civil War of 1936 followed a natural and basic division.

now becomes an obsession which often assumes morbid forms. It is a dominant note in most of the writers who come into prominence at the turn of the century, and who form the more immediate background to the Civil War of 1936.

No better indication of the general trend of political ideas and of the kind of emotional atmosphere in which the liberal and socialist republicans of 1931 grew to maturity can be found than the speeches and writings of Joaquín Costa (1846-1911). His feelings as he looked on Spain after 1898 were harsh and bitter. The Anglo-Saxons of America have completed what those of Europe began: they have taken a sponge and wiped out half Spain from the map of the world — the other half had already wiped itself out in a slow suicide without realizing it. All that is left of Spain is a rotting corpse, such apparent signs of life as she may show being only the writhing of the maggots in her putrefying flesh. Either she must be resurrected or she must be buried. It is true that other countries still admit some difference between Spain and Morocco, but unless Spaniards can shake off their mortal lethargy this will cease to be the case and Spain will only be fit to be reconquered and civilized by Moroccan Moors. This lethargy, this deathly disease, is the lifeless and rigid clinging to the past as a limpet clings to the rock. Spain is governed by a regime of necrocracy, this rule by the dead being the enormous crushing weight of tradition — a dead weight because there is nothing at all to be proud of or even satisfied with in her history and culture after 1500. 'The only way to honour our past is to put a full stop.' Spain must breathe the European air, must change its African atmosphere for a European one. A superhuman effort must be made to catch up to Europe after four centuries of resisting progress; only in that way can Spain retain her right to independence, for Europe cannot indefinitely consent to have a fossilized medieval tribe trailing behind it.

Costa coined a slogan, 'School and larder', to express the policy by which this 'europeanization' of Spain was to be achieved — by a reform of education and by a concentration on economic progress. The new education must begin by ruthlessly wiping off the blackboard all the heroic names and deeds of Spain's past. Such names as Lepanto must never again penetrate into the minds of the young, whose eyes must be set only on the path of economic progress. Especially must there be no religious education, for religion, if it is not to be an abstract formula, can only rise from the heart, not enter through the ears.

Tinkering at measures of reform will avail nothing. The europeanization of Spain can only be effected by the violent upheaval of revolution. 'The idea of Spain — and I don't mean just her regeneration, I mean her very existence — is inextricably linked with the idea of revolution.' On that point Costa was quite emphatic: he preached

that there should be no scruples about legality—revolutions can only be revolutionary, and parliaments exist to ratify them, not to make them.

There was, of course, nothing new in Costa's condemnation of Spanish tradition and his rejection of Spanish culture: he was merely saying again what all radicals had been saying for over a century. But his tone was new. Left-wing politicians and writers, such as Castelar, had previously been, on the whole, idealistic optimists. They really believed that their ideals were practicable, and that their realization was just round the corner. They really believed that a change of regime and a change of government would automatically restore the Garden of Eden and make men not only peaceable but also good. Costa had no such naive belief. He inherited a mounting disillusionment, he felt himself and Spain ever more tightly constricted and struggled to break the bonds. Contempt for Spain's history and culture had grown into anger, into a kind of morbid national self-laceration. Both the unrestraint of Costa's vituperation of his country and his unequivocal advocacy of revolution were symptoms of the despairing sense of angry frustration which consciousness of their nationality had come to breed in many Spaniards.

This note is struck, whether fortissimo as in Costa or muted as in Azorín, by so many writers that it must be considered a keynote of twentieth-century Spain in the period up to the Second Republic. The most prolific of these writers was Pío Baroja, who is generally held to be the greatest Spanish novelist of this century. This is an exaggeration, but Baroja is certainly, or was during the period we are here concerned with, the most widely read. Nearly all the novels he wrote at this period are full of a harsh criticism of Spanish life in which nothing whatever is spared. But whereas such criticism had previously been directed from the standpoint of a 'Europe' whose progressive modernity was the touchstone of Spain's decadence, the criticism of Baroja is not counterbalanced by any positive standard. It is destructiveness for its own sake. 'I have [he wrote] always been a radical liberal, an individualist and an anarchist. Everything in liberalism that is destructive of the past appeals to me; everything in it that aims at pulverizing the type of society we inherit from the past fills me with great joy. On the other hand everything that is constructive in liberalism—universal suffrage, the rule of the common man, the parliamentary system—all those things seem to me ridiculous and useless.' Most of the heroes and heroines of his novels (he has or had a special predilection for anarchists) are actively critical, but they seem to have no faith in anything beyond the need to struggle against society. They know that in the end they will be faced with failure and ruin, but they throw their bombs and then accept death with resigned fatalism, content that they have lived actively and have refused to be cowed.

However poor an opinion one may have of Baroja's artistic merits, one must concede him significance as an index to a phase of a national culture. Nihilism as such was, of course, in no way peculiar to the Spain of 1900-36: but Baroja's own particular brand was intimately connected with the state of his country. It arose from a contemptuous dissatisfaction with Spain as a nation, and it ranged itself more or less automatically on the side of the political Left.

In my opinion [says one of his characters who would seem to have his approval] the life of Spain today is like a mummy swathed in bandages . . . What can be devised to make the figure move and walk? I think there are two methods: the first — and the better — is violence, the struggle by the individual as an individual, throwing aside the moral ideas of the past, religion, honour, all those preoccupations which have crushed us, reducing the State to a mechanical artifice, to a police force and a code of law; the second is the levelling of all men by socialism. I hold that Spain should have no other morality than the stimulation of self-love. Let us not hear any more about country, or religion, or State, or sacrifice; the only appeal to a Spaniard should be to his pride and envy. That man has done more than you, you must do more than he.

One is tempted to think that novels where sentiments such as these were expressed could have been written only *pour épater les bourgeois*, but there were undoubtedly numbers of Spaniards who received them with favour, and many more who received them without scandal. The absence of any civic pride in a large section of the nation must surely have contributed to Baroja's popularity, which is not, in my opinion, easily accounted for on other grounds.

Only a general tension, a state of feeling approaching nihilism, in the Spanish life of that period, born of the anger of national self-contempt, can explain the extreme, unreasonable and completely unintelligent forms then taken by the historical controversy concerning the causes and origins of Spanish 'decadence'. The Inquisition was left far behind as the *terminus a quo*, and even Ortega y Gasset, in his *España invertebrada* (1923), lent the prestige of his authoritative voice to the new theory that Spain had never been anything but decadent and uncivilized ever since, with the Visigoths, she emerged as an independent nation.

The cruellest things any Spaniard has ever said of Spain, and at the same time those most full of anguish, are to be found among the poems of one of her two greatest poets in modern times, Antonio Machado (1875-1939). Spaniards are 'philosophers nourished by the soup doled out at convent doors, staring impassively at the wide vault of heaven'. Spain is mortally wounded, but 'they have dressed

her up in fancy dress for carnival, poor, haggard, drunk, so that her hand may never find her wound'. The bitterness of Machado is given the same inevitable political direction as Costa's. I quote from the poem *El mañana efímero* (1913).

That low, worthless Spain which prays and yawns, that decrepit gambler, quarrelsome and sad; that Spain which prays and which, when it deigns to use its head, lowers it for a bull-like charge; that low Spain will still give birth to a long line of gentlemen who love the sacrosanct traditions; there will still be chins for apostolic beards to grow on, and heads to shine with venerable, Catholic baldness. The futile yesterday will engender an empty tomorrow — empty but, thank God! ephemeral . . . Like the nausea of a drunkard sated with bad wine, a red sun is crowning the granite summits with turbid dregs; the sickly taste of the evening of tradition heralds the certain morrow of a surfeited stomach. But another Spain is being born, the Spain of the mallet and the chisel, with that eternal youth formed from the race's solid and enduring past. An implacable Spain, Spain of redemption, Spain that is dawning with an axe in her avenging hand, a Spain of anger, a Spain that thinks.

In 1939 Machado followed the remnants of the Spain of the mallet and the chisel from Barcelona into France and died shortly after crossing the frontier.

Nothing would be cruder than to deduce from this poem that Machado was a marxist poet of the kind familiar to us today: he was a poet of spiritual anguish, searching for the God he could never find. But the poem may help to show how so many of the liberal-republican leaders of the period 1931-36, the heirs of Costa, the cultural brothers of Machado, were impelled by the logic of their movement to seek for their political allies first among the socialists, and then among the communists and anarchists as well.

3

A movement which for long denied any value in Spain's history and culture, and which remained so obsessed with national decadence that it did not shrink from violent vituperation of everything Spanish, was bound to foment the very things it attacked. Sincere revolutionary reformers cannot be denied the name of patriots; but patriotism of a simpler kind — one that instinctively resents an insult against one's country before considering whether it is justified — is more common. The more violent the insult the less critical is this patriotism likely to be. The abuse to which Spain has been subjected for so long by so many of her sons in the name of reform, not only made others of her sons rush in to shield and vindicate the country they

loved, but also made this patriotic reaction resist reforms, and tend to blind itself to the need for them, because the reformers in spitelessly reviling their country appeared as traitors, as the 'anti-Spain'. This charge of 'treason' made it all the easier for the Right to proclaim in the name of patriotism the same violence that the Left preached in the name of progress. Violence called to violence across the psychological-emotional gulf that divided Spain.

Like its opposite, the political mentality produced by this patriotism has been profoundly affected by the historical consciousness that haunts Spaniards. 'Since there is no greatness for me to admire in the present, I have taken upon my weak shoulders the thankless task of being the executor of our former culture'; so wrote the young Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo (1856-1912), whose immense erudition did more than anything else to make Spanish culture an object of serious study. This approach from the contrast between the present and the past led him, great scholar though he was, to use the interpretation of history in order to establish a political thesis, namely: 'Spain, which carried the Gospel to half the world; Spain, the scourge of heretics, the light of Trent, the sword of Rome, the cradle of St Ignatius — that is our greatness and our unity; we have no other. If ever it is completely lost, then Spain will return to the cantonalism of the Arevaci, of the Vectones, or of the Taifa kingdoms'. Obviously such phrases as 'scourge of heretics' were deliberately chosen to hurl proud defiance at contemporaries like Castelar, who shuddered with horror at these particular aspects of Spain's past. It was the need for this defiance — itself the product of the need to feel proud of Spain in order to love her — that made it possible for Menéndez Pelayo to link with such uncompromising certitude an interpretation of the past with a prophecy for the future. The statement would still, I suppose, appear axiomatic to the greater part of the Spanish Right. However true the premise, the conclusion does not necessarily follow from it; yet the argument is no more illegitimate than its counterpart — that the backward state of Spanish industry in 1869 was due to the expulsion of the Jews nearly four centuries previously. In either case, dispassionate observation of a practical problem — deficient economic production; political unity on a national basis as against regionalist disruption — was made impossible by the emotional necessity of viewing it through the distorting lens of a past long since dead.

But pride in the fact that Spain had been the powerful champion of Catholicism in the period of its gravest crisis was not only linked with contemporary problems of centralization or federalism, it was also extended to cover the place of Spain in the world and to determine her future contribution to civilization. The clearest exposition of this development is to be found in a work by a historian of repute,

El destino de España en la historia universal (1936) by Z. García Villada, S.J. Here the assumption that past history is a beacon guiding the present into the future produces the assertion that Divine Providence has assigned a 'destiny' to Spain, a definite mission to fulfil in world history. Just as the Jews ceased to exist as a nation because they failed to fulfil their destiny, so Spain too will perish if she proves false to hers. History reveals that this national destiny consists in 'the defence and propagation of the Kingdom of Christ on earth, which is the Catholic Church'. National greatness ensued when this destiny was fully accepted; national decline has marched hand in hand with its progressive weakening. The vast mission fields of Africa and Asia still offer Spain the opportunity of fulfilling her destiny, but first her rulers must reverse the process of national apostasy: 'Spain, if she is *officially Catholic*, will be the champion of *Universalism*¹ and *Catholicity*. Spain, if she is *atheist* or *officially laicized*, will be nothing and will perish' (author's italics).

It would be not only illegitimate but also stupid to criticize Catholics (ways and means apart) for wishing to defend and strengthen Catholicism within the frontiers of their country and propagate it beyond them. But it needs no non-Catholic to point out, first that the close association of religion with politics, in such a way that it is difficult to be sure whether politics is a means to a religious end or religion a means to a political end, raises different and debatable issues; secondly, that the particular issue here produced — the survival of a nation as a nation being made to depend upon the political support of a particular religion — is founded neither on reason nor on history; thirdly, that the belief in a national destiny, in the sense of a divinely appointed mission, is in no way warranted by belief in the existence of a providential order in history. But the point I wish to stress is that these intellectual weaknesses and confusions appear more intelligible in the light of the need — urgently felt as a patriotic duty and as a means to individual self-respect — to case in armour those parts of the national history most strongly attacked. If Spanish history had not been made the universal scapegoat in so unreasonable a way, it would not have been so unreasonably defended. The defence must be criticized, but the criticism should be tempered with understanding and some measure of sympathy.

Before the turn of the century, however, the scope of 'the problem of Spain' had been enlarged when the question of national psychology was added to that of national history. Since it is still debated in this

¹ This word, as used by Spaniards in this sort of context, denotes the universality of spiritual and moral values; the pursuit of ends of this order outside the national frontiers; and the doctrine that all nations must sacrifice self-interest in order to further the spiritual good of humanity as a whole. The reader is asked to recall this definition when he meets the word again.

wider setting, the little book responsible for placing it there—*Idearium español* (1897) by Angel Ganivet—has exercised an influence disproportionate to its intrinsic merits. Ganivet was less concerned with the valuation of the past than with national prospects for the future; for him the causes of Spain's political decline were less important than its effects. These seemed to him to be of a moral order, a national apathy preventing any form of fruitful activity; and this he attributed to the fact that, for a century or more, Spain had been engaged in an activity that was unsuited to her. His object was to discover the type of activity that would suit the national character, and for this he had first to establish from the study of social customs, national institutions and history what the national character was.

His findings (the arguments by which they were reached need not concern us) were roughly these. Spaniards, with their notorious incapacity for any kind of organized efficiency, have proved themselves incapable of producing a highly-developed material civilization. This is because the genius of Spain is religious and artistic, both of which qualities combined to produce the highest manifestation of the Spanish spirit, the great mystics of the sixteenth century. Spain therefore cannot hope, and should not try, to keep in step with the progressive nations of the modern world. Her attempt to do so under political liberalism has brought her to a chronic state of helpless inactivity, precisely because politico-economic ideals are incapable of stirring any national enthusiasm in the instinctively religious Spanish soul. A solution to the present problem is only possible if Spain abandons the wish to be a modern nation—commercialized, industrialized, efficiently organized politically—and concentrates on fulfilling her religious and artistic genius solely in the sphere of 'culture'. Other nations are much better fitted by nature and tradition for creating a material civilization, but none is better fitted than Spain for creating a spiritual, cultural civilization. Spaniards must collectively reject the mechanistic standards and materialistic values adopted from abroad, they must cease imitating foreign countries and deliberately close all doors by which their energies can be enticed abroad, concentrating in isolation on developing their gifts in the only task for which they are fitted, that of building up a culture affirming before the whole world the primacy of the spiritual. This alone is the destiny of Spain and the Hispanic nations in the world: until they realize it they will be fated to remain relatively impotent nonentities in comparison with other countries.

Ganivet offered a balm to soothe the hurt produced in Spaniards by their history when he suggested that political decline might in fact be historical progress. Spain, he said, differs from other European nations in having reached a more advanced stage of historical evolution. The first nation to be made great by colonial expansion,

she has also been the first to pass on to the stage of losing this material greatness. She must therefore be the first to develop into the third stage as yet untroubled by any, that of repudiating the ideal of national greatness measured in terms of territory and economic power. But his most influential contribution to the debate on 'the problem of Spain' was his identification of the 'national character' with 'spiritual' values (by which he understood something wider and looser than the religious-ecclesiastical ones always upheld as belonging to Spanish tradition), and his argument that the difference between Spain and Europe should not be a cause of shame: *Noli foras ire, in interiore Hispaniae habitat veritas*, he said, adapting St. Augustine. Both theses were reinforced and carried further by a greater figure in Spanish life, Unamuno, whose advocacy of them must have helped them to acquire, as they have done among the Right, the character of national dogmas.

Unamuno, then a young man, came forward as a disciple of Costa when the latter first put before Spaniards his uncompromising 'Either Europe or Spain'. But before long Unamuno reacted violently against this and never afterwards retraced his steps. The antithesis between Europe and Spain he never at any time denied; it was when Europe came to repel him that he asserted his passionate pride in being a Spaniard.

For my own part I must confess that the more I think about it, the greater repugnance do I feel deep within me for everything that claims to be a directing principle of the modern European spirit, for the orthodox science of today, for its methods and its tendencies.

He began by attacking the idea of progress.

Of what use is a progress whose only aim is to make each man die more peacefully and more content for having lived? Progress is a more degrading and vile superstition than all those that are attacked in its name. It has been made into an abstraction, and from an abstraction into an idol. It is our terrible destiny, our inhuman nemesis that, incarnate in Evolution, has reappeared to enslave our weary souls. Absolutely nothing is to be gained from a progress that compels us to become so intoxicated with business, work and science that we become deaf to the voice of eternal wisdom insistently repeating to us 'Vanity of vanities'.

He turned, then, and lashed all those europeanizers who would raise Spain out of the slough of backwardness and ignorance. If Spain is backward, what does being forward mean? If it means science, commercialism, industrial efficiency, speed, then thank God that Spain is backward. And as for ignorance, the ignorance of backward

Spaniards is an eternal wisdom in comparison with the inanity of modern knowledge. For the scientific and commercial mind of today says 'We must live', and looks for ways and means of making life longer and easier, whereas the wisdom of ignorance says 'We must die', and looks for ways and means that prepare one to die well.

This wisdom Unamuno found in Spanish life and in Spanish culture, a culture that, he stated, is passionate and mystical in contrast to the scientific and materialistic culture of modern Europe. Spanish life and culture are the reply to the modern sacrifice of the individual on the altars of collectivity, for Spain has always upheld the destiny of his own individual soul as being the thing that concerns a man most closely and urgently, as being a preoccupation more essentially human than any other. Faced then with two antagonistic cultures, the one modern and European, the other backward and Spanish, Unamuno wholeheartedly chose the latter; and having begun as a champion of the europeanization of Spain he made himself the fervent advocate of the hispanization of Europe (the phrase is his). Far from Spain having to breathe the European air, it is Europe (he held) that needs to breathe the freer, more human air of Spain. And Unamuno never tired of affirming his patriotism with an ardour of expression that is sometimes embarrassing to his reader.

Neither in Gánivet nor in Unamuno did these ideas have any political implication, and neither would have been particularly pleased to see them serve the cause of the political Right. Yet, because they vindicated Spain by meeting her detractors on their own ground, turning their weapons of 'Europe' and 'modernity' into boomerangs, it was inevitable that this should happen. Not that these ideas were or ever could have been translated into a political programme, but they did facilitate the creation of something which was both a historical apologia for Spain and a kind of 'philosophy of Spanish nationality', which effectively turned the mind and heart of anyone to whom it appealed against all the basic principles of the Left.

The work which did this, and which the Right immediately took and still take for gospel, was *Defensa de la Hispanidad* (1934) by Ramiro de Maeztu. Like Unamuno he too had begun as a disciple of Costa only to turn away from his master. Becoming one of the leaders of the monarchist party as reconstituted during the Republic, he was one of the murdered victims of the Civil War.

One's country for Maeztu is a spiritual value or opportunity — it is one of the means for helping a man to save his soul. But it can be this only if it stands for universal values, if it places universal truth and justice before selfish political or economic interests. The progress of the modern world, however, has been in the opposite direction: man is the measure of all things; good is determined by the will of the majority; might is right; values are relative, and since what

is good for one group does not cease to be so if it is bad for another, wars ensue between classes and nations.

Maeztu claimed that Spanish tradition — the concept of the Spanish state — was based on spiritual values. Two principles run through it: that moral values are absolute, and that all men are equal in nature and dignity. The whole of this tradition emphasizes that there is no such thing as a spiritually inferior person; the Spanish empire was founded on racial and spiritual equality; and the Spanish state was organized on the basis of the subordination of political and economic interests to a universal and absolute standard of right. The result was a civilization imbued with a universalism on a spiritual level, not with a narrow nationalism on a materialist level, and this it was that impelled Spain to defend the religious unity of Europe against the secessionist sectarianism of the Reformation. Spain stood consistently for the principles of universalism and unity,¹ the denial of which has brought the modern world to chaos. There must be a return to the tradition that Spain upheld if the world is to emerge out of the chaos of conflicting national rivalries.

The great Spain of the past was less populous and less wealthy than the Spain of today, and men then would have been no better than they are now. The great superiority of the old Spain to the new lay in the fact that society was organized on a system that urged men to come into contact with the spiritual, by keeping a religious and moral ideal always before them. But liberalism, believing in freedom from constraint, believing that men will improve if left to themselves, destroyed this old social organization, especially the educational and cultural influence of the Church on which it was based. Whereas previously men had had in society an inducement to a higher life, there is no such inducement today: society is no longer a guide, individuals are at sea and self-interest is rampant. There is no longer a collective moral conscience embodied in a stable social organization.

Maeztu therefore sees 'the problem of Spain' as one resulting from the divorce of the State from religious principles. All standards of values are distorted: secondary things, like politics and economics, are made primary. Costa's ideal of 'school and larder' is insufficient — these things should be not the end for which a nation exists but the means to the final end of the sanctification of men. Spaniards require the vision of a higher patriotism than school and larder. They require to see again the spiritual ideal that once characterized Spain. The world which Spaniards have come to think superior to their own country is now collapsing. It needs for its salvation the old ideal of Spain — the ideal of human brotherhood in spiritual equality, the

¹ For a better understanding of the concept of 'universalism' in this historical context see the essay, which grinds no political axe, by R. Menéndez Pidal: *Idea imperial de Carlos V* (1937; reprinted Buenos Aires, 1941).

ideal of a life directed towards a spiritual end, a life at the service of universal truth and justice, not a life lived merely in the search for material prosperity. To recapture this ideal for herself as a model for the whole world is Spain's mission. In it she will find her lost soul, the soul of her history and tradition.

Whether there is any measure of justification for all these generalizations about Spanish history and culture; whether, indeed, generalizations of this kind can be validly made at all — these questions are not relevant to this article. What is important is that these generalizations have been made and have been influential, and this article aims at explaining why this should be so. The Spanish situation cannot be understood if one is ignorant of the strong and persistent current of mental and emotional distress that runs through the life of modern Spain — the consciousness of national humiliation, the obsession with the past, the sense of frustration, together with the need and the urge to overcome it. Wide differences of social policy, deeply rooted religious antagonisms, political tub-thumping, crude resentments, aggressive cruelty — all these things, and many more, entered into the Civil War. But I do not think it untrue to say that deep down below the level of the conflict of ideologies it was also a struggle to achieve a sense of national self-respect. Its real tragedy is completely hidden by the facile division into 'Fascist' and 'Communist' and the quick dismissal of one or the other. In so far as it is possible to trace, through the intervening century and a half, a connexion between the Civil War and the fatuous question *Mais que doit-on à l'Espagne?* its tragedy is also tinged with irony.

4

The Civil War, which changed so much, did not — could not — change enough; it may even, perhaps, have aggravated the underlying problem. The following passage was written in 1951, but it could have been written at any time during the preceding half century:

If I speak of a Spanish inferiority complex, I don't do so by way of diagnosis; I am merely choosing an expression which seems adequate to express a fact that exists and that has often been discussed. The fact exists, and it exists especially in the consciousness of all those Spaniards who meditate on what exactly it means to be a Spaniard. In Spaniards, the consciousness of being different from the rest of the world is alive and almost a bleeding wound.¹

¹ Juan José López Ibor: *El español y su complejo de inferioridad*, Madrid, 1951, pp. 18-19. I may conveniently refer here to another recent work which contains material relevant to my theme: Vicente Palacio Atard: *Derrota, agotamiento, decadencia en la España del siglo XVII. (Un punto de enfoque para su interpretación)*, Madrid, 1949.

The last fourteen years have therefore neither closed the debate on 'the problem of Spain' nor broken the continuity of the arguments brandished. Thus, when the greatest of Spanish scholars writes an Introduction to a new and monumental History of Spain that begins publication under his general editorship, it is natural and inevitable (and the equivalent would not, I suppose, be natural in any other country) that the Introduction should take the form of an extensive analysis of the national character as exemplified throughout history and should conclude with a political appeal.¹

As one would expect from its distinguished author, this is the most interesting and learned of the treatises on the subject. It is also the most dispassionate and balanced, viewing Spanish history not as something to be either praised or condemned *en bloc*, but as something which in all its stages shows both praiseworthy and reprehensible features. When he arrives at the present, Señor Menéndez Pidal distributes censure with equal severity to each of 'the two Spains', condemning both alike for their intolerant exclusiveness, and concluding with a profession of faith in 'toleration, that priceless fruit of the noblest peoples' and with a plea for concord among Spaniards, for mutual respect between the forces of innovation and tradition, so that there may arise an 'integral' Spain — neither of the Right nor of the Left, but of both — on the basis of the 'affectionate interest' of all Spaniards 'in that Spain of old which shed such brilliance on important periods of world history'.

There are no signs as yet that any movement, directly or indirectly political, could arise to further this 'integration'. What is certain is that such 'integration' must begin on the 'cultural' level, by making the national history cease to be a weapon of attack and defence, and by substituting a calm and judicial approach to the study of the past. Such equanimity — with the consequent slackening of tensions — has yet to show itself.²

A second eminent scholar, Professor Américo Castro, has given, in exile, his 'explanation' of Spain in terms of his interpretation of the formative period of her history.³ This work is one of the most fascinating and important ever written about Spain. It is also in

¹ Ramón Menéndez Pidal: *Los españoles en la historia. Cima y depresiones en la curva de su vida política* (Historia de España, vol. I, Madrid, 1947). English translation: *The Spaniards in their History* (Hollis & Carter, 1950).

² The *History of Spain* which Menéndez Pidal is editing has not yet reached controversial periods. Another scholar's recent contribution to the debate on 'the problem of Spain', *Los elementos de la civilización y del carácter españoles* (Buenos Aires, 1950) by Rafael Altamira, may be considered dispassionate, but it does not seem to me particularly interesting or important.

³ *España en su historia* (Buenos Aires, 1948). To this volume of over 700 pages should be added the essays by the same author collected under the title *Aspectos del vivir hispánico* (Santiago de Chile, 1949).

some respects one of the most dangerous, for its material — valuable in itself — is selected, presented and linked by a thesis that is largely special pleading. This fact, and the reason for it, is what interests us here. A quotation from the first page of the first chapter will at once place this work in the context of this article: 'Mistresses of half the globe for three centuries, Spain and Portugal have arrived at the present day with less political and economic strength than Holland or Scandinavia, which share in the lustre and brilliance of Europe. The Hispano-Portuguese world has gone on living after the prestige of its past has died — a splendid past, but one which at the same time is enigmatic to many . . . Viewed from so problematical a present, the past is transformed wholly into a problem that compels the observer to sharpen his gaze, because even the most marvellous deeds of remote history seem to be wrapped in melancholy prophecies of a fatal and definitive decline. The past is then felt to be the precursor of a hypothetical future.' Professor Castro proceeds to argue that a historian cannot remain uninfluenced by his own times, but he does not apply this in any of the ways in which one would not quarrel with the statement. For his thesis is this: modern Spaniards are filled with a sense of uncertainty, a desire to escape from themselves; if the past is looked at from this standpoint it becomes apparent that 'from the fifteenth century to the present day there runs unbroken the trembling line of this anxiety about [Spain's] own existence'. He continues: 'It seems to me, in consequence, that the first thing we must demand of history is that it account for this primary phenomenon: here we have a form of life whose first and constant problem is uncertainty and anguish concerning its own existence, the inability to see clearly, a perpetual state of perplexity and alarm.'

A full and lengthy explanation of this 'primary phenomenon' is then offered: this 'uncertainty' is due to the fact that the Spanish character was moulded out of, and the Spanish 'way of life' founded on, two closely linked but antagonistic cultures — a Christian-European and a Semitic-Oriental. The explanation does not concern us here; what I wish to emphasize — and I do so with all respect — is that Professor Castro interprets the history of Spain before he writes it, because he takes the present as the norm of the past; or more exactly, because he makes his reactions as historian to the events of the past identical with his own personal reactions to the present. Since these are reactions of distress and anguish, one would prefer not to criticize this procedure in what must appear an unfeeling way. I hope it will be evident, once again, how necessary it is in the case of modern Spain to temper criticism with sympathetic understanding.

The anguish of Professor Castro differs from the anguish of Costa.

The latter never saw the ideal Spain he envisaged, whereas Professor Castro has seen the Spain of 1931 — the Spain on which such high hopes were set — crash in ruins. 'This people', he now writes of his countrymen, 'have on more than one occasion marched forward to their ruin as if to some joyous Saturnalia.' In consequence the relation of present to past is different now in him from what it used to be among the Left. The attitude to the present is still one of anguish; the explanation is still looked for in the past; but whereas previously the past, viewed as one huge error, pointed to the right road for the future, now it seems that in Professor Castro the past is used to explain — and to that extent to justify — the failure of the liberal-republican attempt to 'modernize' and 'europeanize' Spain. How could it have succeeded? Spain has always been problematical; fated to pass through history in a constant state of anguished uncertainty she has always followed illusions. To equate Professor Castro's interpretation of Spanish history with the contemporary political state of Spain is to read between the lines; but his explanation of Spain has itself no other explanation. His reader is left with the impression that Spain's present not only explains her past but also liquidates her future. Nothing has ever succeeded; nothing can ever succeed.

All this does not mean that Professor Castro has, in despair, abandoned all faith in his country. Significantly enough, the faith he now clings to approximates him to certain standpoints of the Right. Spain is not, and cannot be, properly European — or, in Professor Castro's words, her 'form of life' does not fit into the pattern of 'Graeco-European rationalism'. But this does not mean that Spain is to be rejected as worthless. Who would say that on the level of the highest human values Rojas (the author of *La Celestina*), Hernán Cortés, Cervantes, Velázquez and Goya are of less worth than Leonardo, Copernicus, Descartes, Newton and Kant? Professor Castro holds fast, therefore, to the cultural achievements of the past. Though there have always been great differences between him and Costa, due to the different experiences of two distinct generations, none the less, in the pattern of modern Spanish history, there are clear spiritual and cultural links between the two. This makes Professor Castro's present standpoint all the more significant. The culture that previously, by its apparent negativeness, had confirmed the politico-economic condemnation of Spain, is now the only positive worth that redeems her from that same condemnation.

5

The two standpoints of Don Ramón Menéndez Pidal and Don Américo Castro — two of the most distinguished and influential men of modern Spain — would seem to offer an occasion to which the

Spanish Right could well rise. Judging by published writings alone, there is no indication that they will do so. On the contrary, they appear to be tied to the assumptions that derive, on the one hand from Menéndez Pelayo through Fr Villada, on the other hand from Ganiwet, through Unamuno and Maeztu.

As an example of the present-day Right-wing 'conception of Spain' I select *España, sin problema* (1949) by Rafael Calvo Serer.¹ Here we meet again two basic assumptions. First, the insistence on history, on the living contemporaneity of the past: 'a people who are ignorant of the meaning of their history are condemned to inescapable death, for the actions of a people are only positive and fruitful if they follow the line of national tradition; the fidelity of a nation to its own history is a necessary condition for the production of a creative culture'. Secondly, the restatement of belief in an exalted national 'mission', conceived in spiritual-religious terms: '... in the complex of national cultures Spain has had a special mission clearly defined. In the totality of values realized by different peoples the highest mission fell to our lot, and the process of the secularization of western culture plots the curve of our decadence at the same time as it plots that of the disintegration of Europe.' This vision of Spain's historical mission coupled now with a realization of Europe's own decline causes the Spain-Europe dilemma to disappear, for the relations between the two are now inverted: 'Today we have at our disposal a Christian and Spanish doctrine of history, which enables us to put an end to the literature of decadence and to evaluate European history from the standpoint of an optimistic conception of Spanish history.'² The present generation of Spaniards can see clearly what their predecessors were prevented from seeing: that what is alone worth learning from Europe complements the national tradition for the necessity of whose retention Europe itself is now evidence. On the double basis of fidelity to her tradition (a religious conception of life and a Catholic culture) and incorporation of European science and technology (in such a way that these do not attack the spirit but serve it) Spaniards will at last be able to face the future with confidence. 'When the day comes in which Europe can avoid destruction only by returning to the Christian roots of its history, the nation which sacrificed everything in order to maintain that spirit alive will once again become a principal actor in the history of the West.'

Not all contemporary Right-wing views of Spain are as sober as

¹ The book may be considered representative; the author, as editor of the review *Arbor*, holds a position of some importance in Spanish intellectual life.

² The calamities that have overwhelmed Europe, and those that threaten, appear to be lightening the burden of the Spanish 'inferiority complex' and to be entrenching the Messianic conception of Spanish history. There is — perhaps not surprisingly — something not far removed from *Schadenfreude* in much contemporary Spanish writing on current affairs — not, however, in Señor Calvo.

this. There are others that show alarming tendencies. Since these follow directly from the various postulates whose formulation this article has been attempting to account for, they should be included here.

Ganivet embarked upon the analysis of the national character in the hope that this might reveal a solution to the impasse of political instability. With Señor Menéndez Pidal the inquiry has had, at least implicitly, a similar practical aim: that of discovering and emphasizing the defects that have consistently appeared in the organization of Spanish society. In most cases, however, this type of speculation seems to have served the purpose of overcoming the sense of national insufficiency by stressing compensatory virtues. But now certain philosophical aberrations seem to be emerging out of the assumption that there is such a thing as a consistent national psychology both deducible from, and serving as a key to, 2000 years of a country's history. A further step produces the assertion that a nation has a 'soul' — an 'essence' which 'informs' or 'impregnates' all its history, and which is susceptible of an 'anthropological interpretation'. The conviction of a providentially assigned 'mission', of a Messianic 'destiny', holds hands with this, and Professor Castro's 'Spanish form of life' (or the Spanish 'historical mode of existence', as other writers prefer to call it) is obviously, if by comparison somewhat shyly, near by. The next step forward produces this:

When Spaniards come to be totally fused with their essence, adhering to it by means of an intrinsic mode of knowledge, their life will return to its pristine essential glory. This union — which is not a cold act of reason, nor even an aesthetic attitude, but a mystical union, the impregnation by an essence, a kind of marriage of two distinct worlds, life and essence — will go on forming its collective consciousness more effectively than hitherto. It will create a new style, which will be new because it will not be stained, as it has been in recent times, by negative and sub-historical forces. The style, in short, will not be new nor will it be old; it will be the style that has always been, because it will be the pure reflection of the essence of the Spanish man. In other words, an essence which has become flesh, blood and history.¹

In short, nationalism in Spain, as elsewhere, can give rise to a pseudo-philosophical 'mysticism' which opens up extremely danger-

¹ J. J. López Ibor, op. cit., pp. 110-11. Since I do not understand this passage I have been compelled to translate it literally. The book from which it is taken appears in what is intended to be a serious and responsible series, the *Biblioteca del Pensamiento Actual*, which contains, among other things, translations of Guardini, Gilson and Haecker.

ous paths. This particular aberration follows from the obsession with the national psychology; the parallel obsession with the national history can likewise be pushed to extremes which are also not so very far removed from the intellectual absurdities produced in Nazi Germany.

Not only the history of Spain but, in effect, the whole history of Europe has been re-interpreted on the basis of the various postulates and theories which have sprung up, at different times, in defence of Spanish history. Namely, that a defining element in the Spanish character is the belief in the dignity of human nature and in the equality of all men; that this finds expression in Catholic Christianity; that the national character guarantees the continuity of a nation's history and is visible in all its episodes; that Spain has had a Messianic mission in history; that this mission is the propagation of 'universalism'; and that Spain is not European (a Left-wing reproach now become a source of pride). All this combines to produce the following. Spain has always stood apart from Europe, influencing Europe to Europe's good but only influenced by Europe to her own harm. The dichotomy should, however, be inverted: it is 'Europe' that is not European. Beyond the Pyrenees lies the 'Germanic' Europe, feudal, arrogantly racial, nationalist, sectarian, secessionist, 'Protestant'; to the south of the Pyrenees lies a Spain that throughout history has alone perpetuated the pure essence of classical culture — the idea of universalism. The Roman Empire and the Roman ideal were Hispanic creations, implanted upon Rome and the western world by 'Spaniards' such as Hadrian, Trajan, Marcus Aurelius and Seneca. By creating this universal Empire Spain prepared the way for the spread of Christianity and became then and 'for all time' the vanguard of the Kingdom of God on earth. Spain converted Constantine (Bishop Hosius was a 'Spaniard'), and created Christendom because the 'Spaniard' Theodosius achieved the practical embodiment of the idea of a universal Christian Empire. Later Spain made possible the Christian culture of the Middle Ages, because, by saving Europe from Islam, she permitted Christendom to survive and grow. With the Reformation Spain struggled to preserve this Christendom under the sign of the Universal Church. Defeated, she was kept permanently weak by the exploitation of bad foreign kings and the misguided doctrines of europeanizing politicians. But now, after 1939, it is possible once more for Spain to proclaim her message to the world, and the Hispanic peoples of Europe and America, raising their united voice on behalf of the equality of all men and their unity in brotherhood, will once more save Christendom, civilization and mankind.¹

I do not put this naive fantasy forward as being representative of

¹ Antonio Almagro: *Constantes históricas del pueblo español* (Madrid, 1951).

any considerable section of Spanish opinion today — I do not know whether it is.¹ I summarize it because it illustrates how easily myths grow. There is no single idea or statement in this thesis which does not derive, more or less unchanged, from others that this article has noticed. Yet Menéndez Pelayo, Unamuno, Fr Villada and Maeztu would certainly be severally surprised if they could return to see what they had collectively helped to produce.

6

The political dichotomy of Right and Left has been for Spain a very real dilemma, because its roots have reached below the top-soil of normal political issues down to a sub-soil where conflicting feelings of national honour and guilt have ranged the length and breadth of history. Since modern Europe offers — as yet — no parallel to the historical situation of Spain, there is no basis of comparison by which to assess what the 'normal' reaction of a national community should be to the consciousness of 'decadence'. Certainly, on the face of it, the whole debate on the 'problem of Spain' must appear tragically unnecessary today because of the totally absurd extremes from which Spanish history was approached. 'Que doit-on à l'Espagne? Depuis dix siècles, qu'a-t-elle fait pour l'Europe?' 'Spain, the scourge of heretics, ... that is our greatness'. Both these extremes — both so incredible — have cut deeply and painfully into the communal consciousness of Spaniards. For that reason the obsessions and the accumulated bitterness will not easily or quickly be laid aside. Yet in so far as the sins of the parents are intellectual errors and confusions, there is no reason why they should still be visited upon the children. There is no reason why an obsession with the past should any longer be allowed to influence the approach to political activity in the present; there is no reason why Philip II and the Inquisition should have anything whatever to do with the discussion of the merits or demerits of liberal democracy. There is no reason why the historical assumptions upon which the whole Right-wing 'case' is constructed should not be subjected, by the Right themselves, to critical scrutiny; and there is every reason why history should be left to the professional specialist — Clio is an exacting enough mistress even for him. One would also venture to suggest that it should not be too readily taken for granted

¹ One would give this work no more attention than one gives the British Israelites, were it not for the fact that it seems to be connected with the author's work (on the educational side?) in the *Falange* Youth Movement, and that it is prefaced by a laudatory letter from a historian who has produced distinguished work on medieval Castile. There is, however, no such thing as a 'party line' in these matters: the work is not 'official' but is privately published, and the author himself refers to a body of *falangista* opinion which would not accept his ideas.

that Spanish culture is a profoundly religious one.¹ This is certainly very true if one confines that culture to its greatest period, 1500-1680. But 180 years are only a small part of a nation's life, and neither before 1500 nor after 1680 have religious qualities been more conspicuous in Spanish culture than in that of other countries. During the last century and a half, in particular, there can surely be no questioning the fact that the finest manifestations of Catholic spirituality, thought and culture — finest in quality, in depth and in the capacity to meet the challenge of the times — have come from France. Yet one wonders how many Spaniards are aware of this, for one never sees or hears it mentioned. Those of them who proclaim that Spain must assume the task of rebuilding the Christian basis of European civilization should realize that, in comparison with some other countries, she has much lee-way to make up.

That they appear not to realize it is due, I believe, to the fact that the obsessions I have been describing have made Spaniards, as a whole, too introspectively wrapped up in their own problems. This introspection has been fostered by the quite unreal scission between Spain and Europe. There is too little direct intellectual and cultural contact between Spain and other countries, and for reasons that have been explained this isolationism is particularly prevalent — as an often unconscious ingrained habit — among the Right. Spaniards would view their own 'national character', their history and their culture in a better perspective and in a more balanced way (which does not mean that they would have any less reason for pride in them) if they travelled more abroad and if their educational system, especially in the universities, allowed more place for the study of foreign cultures.

But such a *rapprochement* cannot be one-sided. It is essential that the rest of Europe should do nothing to make Spaniards feel that they are a people apart, especially if that implies that they are somehow of a lower status. The only effect of such actions is to deepen the hurt in some Spaniards and to increase isolationist pride in others. The allied post-war policy of diplomatically ostracizing Spain was inevitably interpreted by the great majority of Spaniards as an insult to them as a nation, and could never have had any other effect than that of strengthening the government it was intended to snub. Spain can perhaps be helped to overcome the obsessions that haunt her, but this will not be by continuing to exclude her from international assemblies and treaties. It is sad that political issues should cloud what is really a question of human relations. We need

¹ E.g. 'If Spanish history and culture stand out because they order life to religious ends, in which sphere they show achievements that set the standard of perfection, other cultures are able to contribute what we cannot offer.' (R. Calvo Serer, *op. cit.*, p. 169.)

to make it clear to Spaniards that we respect and esteem them as a people, for what they are as well as for what they have been; we need to assure them — what indeed is no more than the truth — that Europe without Spain is not Europe.

I would suggest, therefore, that an attitude of blunt accusation and condemnation, however directed, is inappropriate to the real nature of the problems underlying the Spanish political situation; we ought to recognize that the Spanish people have suffered and that their wounds are still open. Beyond that, the most that this article has attempted is to make the Spanish situation intelligible and to do something to remove the current impression that this situation is easy to understand.

LORD ACTON¹

HERBERT BUTTERFIELD

It is not clear that anyone could call Lord Acton the best scientific historian that this country has ever produced; but, as he himself said, one great man is worth a dozen immaculate historians, and he was by far the greatest historical thinker that England has ever had. If this were not the case, he would still be the most interesting figure in modern English historiography; for he spans the period when scientific history developed from its infant stages to its full maturity in this country. He attracts attention because he is a problem-personality; and he says the kind of things which still set us quarrelling amongst ourselves. Some of his profound historical analyses have come to have a striking relevance for us in the middle of the twentieth century. Since the end of the Second World War he has had a greater vogue than ever before, and a surprising number of people have been writing, or inquiring, or hankering to do something, about him.

He was born on January 10th, 1834, and he must have been about thirteen — apparently the dangerous age — when he fell in love with history. He preferred to read the French writers at this period because in England, he said, there was a lack of good historians of the 'middling' grade. Certain letters of his, which appeared in Germany but are not in his collected correspondence, show that he determined very early to dedicate himself to learning. Very soon he was confessing that his 'wildest passion' was to make a name for himself.

Scattered amongst the great mass of his historical notes are a number of slips or cards which carry autobiographical jottings. These show that it was in June 1850 that he went to Munich, where for a number of years he lived with the Catholic historian, Döllinger. They also show that this youth of sixteen was an irritating English Whig, carrying his copy of Gibbon, but brimming with cocksureness and 'Macaulayism'; and that Döllinger prescribed to him certain continental writers, such as Guizot, who would serve as an antidote. At the age of ten this boy had called himself 'a perfect linguist' and had enumerated the various sciences that he 'knew'. At times it had seemed to be the son who directed the parent in regard to the educational policy which his case required. During his undergraduate wanderings he would leave the reluctant Döllinger walking.

¹ Lecture delivered for the B.B.C.'s Third Programme on the fiftieth anniversary of Acton's death, June 19th, 1952.

along the bank of the Neckar while he interviewed some famous Protestant scholar. At the age of twenty-one he wrote to his teacher from England that he had found it easy to make an impression on men like Lord John Russell and Macaulay.

Certain notebooks in the Cambridge University Library throw light on Acton's ideas when he was in his early twenties, and give us glimpses of his talks and travels with Döllinger. A diary of his visit to the United States at the age of nineteen was partly published in the *Fortnightly Review* thirty years ago, and as the original cannot be traced I take this opportunity to ask for news of so important a document. We are now able to see how much of Döllinger he had assimilated, and how many of the ideas in his early writings came to be revised or reversed in his later years. At this time he was hostile to Ranke, contemptuous of Gladstone, and bitter against Macaulay, whom he regarded as the apostle of the idea of progress. He wrote that the historian should leave moral judgments to God; it was the business of the historian to study causes and effects. Persecution was not a thing to be condemned out of hand, he said; it was related to a given stage in the history of a civilization. The Protestants had a more cruel theory of persecution than that of the Catholics, for they held that the unbeliever ought to be destroyed as an abomination to God. To Acton, at this stage in his development, the Reformation was a movement against freedom of conscience. It was the Catholic and not the Protestant who could study history without feeling the need to pervert it.

Remarkable changes took place in the outlook of Acton in the 1860s, however. His autobiographical jottings and unpublished letters, together with an analysis of his works, enable us to distinguish four important factors in the story. First of all, in 1859, France and Piedmont, by going to war with Austria, began the unification of Italy and endangered the Temporal Power of the Pope. Newman, the later Cardinal, wrote in favour of Napoleon III and Italy; but Acton loved Austria as a supra-national state, and seemed so pro-papal that one of his journalistic colleagues sent in his resignation. Acton even drafted bitter speeches for the House of Commons — though he never delivered them — urging ministers to exert themselves against the French menace, and recommending subsidies to Austria as in the days of the first Napoleon. Newman therefore argued that though he was a Whig in home politics he was a Tory in foreign affairs. At the same time he had growing misgivings on the subject of the Temporal Power of the Pope. He soon saw that, since foreign troops had to defend it, the system no longer guaranteed the independence of the spiritual authority. Following Döllinger, he seriously hoped that Pius IX would move to Germany — preferably to Würzburg — because there he would

escape from unsatisfactory influences in Rome. There was also an idea that this measure would win over many German Protestants.

The second great factor in the story was Acton's conflict as an editor with ecclesiastical authority. It had been his design to bring German scholarship to England; to achieve intellectual leadership for Roman Catholicism; to show that Christians could be bold in the pursuit of the sciences; and to remove the suspicions or the political fears which Catholicism seemed to raise in this country. One of his objects had been to explain that it was the British constitution — not the Catholic monarchies of the continent — which continued the genuine traditions of the middle ages. At the same time he was afraid that his Catholic fellow-countrymen were too ready 'to eat dirt to obtain the support of the Liberal or Radical party'. Following Döllinger, he proclaimed that the political teaching of Edmund Burke at the time of the French Revolution was the system most appropriate for a Catholic.

His editorial colleague, Simpson, was so brilliantly provocative, and so determined to encroach on theology, that even sympathizers were alienated and Acton himself tried sometimes to hold him back. Acton, for his part, could talk as though piety were a synonym for obscurantism, and would bleat about his desolate position amid an 'ignorant clergy' and an 'illiterate episcopate'. Döllinger had warned him not to wave German scholarship too provokingly at the British; but Acton could deliberately goad his fellow-Catholics, and when they turned on him, rush to Döllinger to find cover. Then, when Döllinger had written on his behalf, he could tell Cardinal Wiseman and others to prepare themselves for a 'stunning' reply in his next issue. There is a hint of conspiracy when Acton and Simpson seek to gain possession of the strategic places in Catholic journalism; or when Acton, sketching an article which Simpson is to work up for the *Edinburgh Review*, proposes the insertion of deliberate mistakes in order to suggest Protestant authorship. More fundamental questions were at issue, however, and at the end of 1863 a papal brief induced Acton to abandon any idea of conducting a journal that should be specifically Catholic. Parallel conflicts occurred in Europe; the papal Syllabus, condemning modern errors, was issued in 1864; from that time the unfavourable influences seemed to be entrenching themselves in Rome. Acton and Döllinger came to feel that the continuance of the Temporal Power only served to strengthen these particular influences.

A third factor in Acton's intellectual development during the 1860s was the beginning of his famous friendship with Gladstone. When Acton saw Pius IX in 1857, it was the Pope who felt that Gladstone was near to Catholicism. It was the youth of twenty-three who warned Pius against this man, saying that he was spoiled

by ambition and was a danger not only in home but also in foreign affairs. In the following year, 1858, Acton mentioned Gladstone as one of the people who had been dragging English critical scholarship through the mire. In the next year again he said that Gladstone 'had not the instincts of a gentleman'. All the same, the two men saw something of one another, perhaps owing to Döllinger, in 1860; and in 1861 Acton sent Gladstone an essay he had published on the conflict between North and South in the United States. In this essay he had attacked the tyranny of democracy, declared that constitutional government could exist only under a king, and denied that there were either religious or political reasons for supporting the abolitionists in America. Gladstone wrote of this essay: 'Its principles of politics I embrace . . . Its whole atmosphere is that which I desire to breathe.' He concluded that in the American Union 'the seat of sovereignty, properly so called, lies in the States severally'. In the next two years Acton is clearly trying to influence Gladstone in politics, and on one issue claims to have succeeded.

The crowning moment in the development of his relations with Gladstone, however, came on March 31st, 1864. A discussion between the two men precipitated a declaration in favour of the disestablishment of the Irish Church; and Gladstone sketched out the whole Irish programme that he was to follow in the succeeding decades. Acton saw this as the regeneration of a party, and over twenty years later he still looked back to it as marking a red-letter day — 'the date of getting the future policy of Liberalism quite clear before me'. At an interval of nearly a quarter of a century it gave him a shock to learn of a letter of the following year, 1865, in which Gladstone said that Irish Disestablishment could not be practicable politics in his lifetime — a discrepancy which is now explicable. The alliance between these two men owed much to religion and to a common love of ecclesiastical scholarship, as well as to the Irish question. In 1867 Acton was concerned in the establishment of another journal, the *Chronicle*, which was avowedly attached to the Gladstone cause. He said that the project would not be pursued unless it was certain that Gladstone desired it, and that it would never have been entertained if there had existed another organ of opinion frankly and worthily identified with Gladstone's interests. A remarkable proportion of the space of that journal was devoted to the problem of Ireland, and particularly to the attempt to rally the Liberals to a policy of Disestablishment which was to regenerate the party.

By this time Acton had come to a new stage in his development as a technical historian. His autobiographical jottings lay stress on the fact that only from 1860 do the archives begin to be properly opened. Though they had consulted manuscripts earlier, it is only from 1864

that he dates authentic manuscript study both for Döllinger and for himself. In that year the two men were working in the Vatican archives, and Acton tells us what a flood of revelations confronted them — revelations which altered their attitude to the history of the Church. In 1865-66 we see him there again, very nervous because he is a suspected man, but, though some papers are difficult to secure, he states more than once that 'there are generally ways and means in Rome'. Manuscripts on Cardinal Pole, on the Spanish Match, on James II's reign, are sent to his rooms; but everything has to be under a vow of secrecy and the atmosphere is somewhat sinister. Then there is an interruption. There has been a rumour in Rome that the originals have been sold to him and that he is going to use them for an attack on the Jesuits. In this historical study we have the fourth of the factors which influenced his intellectual development in the 1860s.

Hitherto his chief work had consisted of learned essays on political ideas or deeply analytical studies of what we should call contemporary history. Döllinger had moved earlier to the subject of papal forgeries and fables and was now turning to the Inquisition. Acton thought for a moment of writing a history of the Index, and then became particularly obsessed with the problem of persecution. All this had too many cross-references to contemporary experience, and Acton began to diverge unconsciously from Döllinger, whose judgments in ecclesiastical history were not so unrelenting. Later in life he came to feel that Döllinger would have been nearer to him if he had not shirked the problem of persecution at this time. Passages on persecution are interpolated in the writings of 1867 on occasions when the context by no means calls for them. In a famous essay on Sarpi he made reference to an example which had nothing to do with Sarpi, and before the article was posted Lady Acton expressed misgivings about the way he attacked a Pope. This turned out to be all the more serious when it transpired later that he had managed to name the wrong Pope, confusing St Pius V with Pius IV.

We must not imagine him up to this time as the serene monarch or the sober judge, as though his kind of history was a grave erudition, frozen into stillness to conform to some classical conception of what we mean by scholarship. He is a little over thirty — one of those irrepressible young men who know everything, read everything, meet everybody, go everywhere, and generally talk your head off. Some of his juvenile works give an impression of great richness and maturity because he thought profoundly about man, and about the phenomena and processes of history; but this kind of thinking has to be done with the imagination and the sympathies, and where these were obstructed by some strong feeling Acton could go astray. On three occasions between 1867 and 1871 he took up the pen on the subject of the

massacre of St Bartholomew. Amongst these writings is one of the most learned and most heavily-footnoted of all the articles he ever wrote. It was his purpose to attack the view that the massacre was the result of a sudden decision — a view which had been prevailing for a considerable time. It might be suggested that a useful way in which to lay bare the technique of history would be to take this article and make a commentary on it inch by inch, showing the various fallacies and discussing the use of evidence in detail. It contains a nice sample of subtle mistakes in interpretation, and even commits the sin which technical historians regard as most unforgivable. One of Acton's main points was to use the correspondence of the Papal Nuncio, Salviati, to support the case for premeditation. He omitted to mention, however, a passage in a printed dispatch — a passage of some significance in the later historiography of the subject — where Salviati says that he cannot bring himself to believe that the massacre was anything but a sudden decision, consequent upon the failure of the attempt to assassinate Coligny. Yet his article carried another quotation from the very dispatch in question — indeed from the identical printed page. Curiously enough, the historian Ranke, working on this subject fifteen years before Acton, and working on extremely thin evidence, had almost exactly hit the truth. Not being deflected by any strong feeling into imagining that even bad men will be pointlessly bad, Ranke had penetrated the subtleties of a situation in which the apparent evidence for premeditation required to be handled with great care.

The scores of rough drafts and jottings on the subject of the Vatican Council which are scattered amongst Acton's notes add little to our knowledge of the man and would require a special paper — a special science — for their interpretation. The most interesting recent sidelight on this part of the story comes in the *Roman Reminiscences* of the Austrian historian, Theodor von Sickel. Acton maintained in print that in the past the Papacy itself had testified against the claim to infallibility; and in respect of this issue a papal document, the *Liber Diurnus* (which had more than once been printed) became a subject of mystery and controversy at the time of the Council. It was claimed that not only had Pope Honorius I been condemned for heresy by the Sixth General Council of the Church, but that in the *Liber Diurnus* the recognition of this fact had been part of the oath which Popes had had to take at the time of their election. For a long time, however, the keepers of the Vatican archives asserted that they could find no trace of the actual manuscript. In the middle of September 1870, the historian, von Sickel, met Acton and his relative, Minghetti, in a Viennese hotel. Minghetti, then the Italian ambassador in Vienna, had revealed that within a few days Italian troops would be entering Rome and would be taking possession of it in the name of

King Victor Emmanuel. 'The rash and resolute Acton', as von Sickel calls him, declared his intention of breaking into the Vatican archives during the disorders and stealing the *Liber Diurnus*. 'Anybody who knew Acton', writes von Sickel, 'will understand that for such a prize he would be ready for an adventure.' And both Minghetti and von Sickel were well aware that it would be useless to try to hold him back. Acton caught the next express to Rome, excusing himself from a dinner which had been arranged to enable him to meet Ranke for the first time. But Minghetti telegraphed to the Italian capital and on September 20th the Italian troops captured Acton near Rome and held him in honourable custody until order had been restored. The *Liber Diurnus* attracted adventure; for eleven years later von Sickel himself, in the Vatican archives, happened to ask for an example of ancient handwriting for purposes of comparison. The official told him that they had a document which would meet the case; and when this was put into his hands the historian quickly recognized it as the *Liber Diurnus* itself.

Towards the end of the 1870s there opened another crisis in Acton's life, which was still more distressing for him and apparently more injurious to his work than that of the Vatican Council itself. It was the rift with Döllinger on the subject of moral judgments in history, and Acton's drafts and jottings, together with his notes of conversations, enable us to see how important and profound it was. It was the more important in that Acton knew that he also differed from other friends, like Gladstone and Lady Blennerhassett, on a topic which he regarded as momentous. He tells us that he had not hitherto realized himself to be out of step with his old teacher. In a lecture on Louis XIV Döllinger had dealt too gently with certain leaders of the Gallican Church. In 1879 he offended by writing a prefatory note to an article by Lady Blennerhassett — too merciful an article on Dupanloup, the bishop of Orleans. This question of moral judgments was such an obsession with Acton that if to his printed declarations and discussions we were to add his mass of manuscript notes the result would be a considerable book. A number of remarks make it clear that his tenacity in the matter was connected with the strength of his feeling in respect to the controversies of his time. He says of Döllinger for example: 'He thinks an Ultramontane can be saved'. Döllinger's reply was that he himself had been an Ultramontane in his youth, and he knew from experience that the charge of criminality did not meet the case. At the same time it would seem that Acton was driven to agony — driven almost to screaming — on the subject of persecution because he saw something in it which Christians were refusing to face, at any rate in their historiography. And if one is too satisfied with easy, conventional answers or solutions, there is a sense in which one's history, in the last resort, cannot be

made to square with itself. Acton tells us that for five years he held 'minute and searching discussions' with Döllinger. Indeed we can see that he was far too pressing, for he relates that in 1883 Döllinger 'made it clear that it was time for our conversations to cease, for this world'. In the draft of an important letter on this subject Acton reveals something of the magnitude of this crisis:

I have renounced public life, and a position favourable to influence in my own country, to pursue an object I cannot attain. I am absolutely alone in my essential ethical position, and therefore useless . . . No other person can ever be so favourably situated as the Professor. The probability of doing good by writings so isolated . . . is so small that I have no right to sacrifice to it my own tranquillity and my duty of educating my children. My time can be better employed than in waging a hopeless war. And the more my life has been thrown away, the more necessary to turn now, and employ better what remains.

Time after time he had brought out a plan for some great historical work. In the later 1870s it had been a history of Liberty, with an opening chapter (of which there are some signs in his notes) giving scores of definitions of the term. The difference with Döllinger appears to have checked his enthusiasm. Later again he complains that he misses encouragement and sympathy, and he talks of his lack of literary skill. In this mood he would say that he had no particular *flair* except for putting slips of paper into books, or placing notes into black boxes. His methods of note-taking are of some interest to the technician and would seem to be worth analysis. Manning had taunted him in 1870 with his lack of success in public life, and Acton's step-father, Lord Granville, told Gladstone that this should stir him to action if anything could. Apart from two lectures, half a dozen articles and a dozen reviews of books, it would be difficult to say what Acton produced between 1872 and 1895. One or two family letters that have strayed into his collections of historical notes show that he had a tenderness and piety which evidently did come to be put on to paper at times. But there is a dryness of flavour, for example, in his letters to Mary Gladstone, which belong largely to the 1880s, and we may wonder whether some springs of emotion in him had not been allowed to close up. On one occasion in these years he apologized for his 'elaborate detachment', his 'unamiable isolation', and the armour which he wore against the world. If he became pontifical as an historian — which was the impression he gave in his professorial lectures at Cambridge — this was only one aspect of the development that was taking place.

He had great erudition, much of it focused on the particularly knotty points of history. According to Maitland, the general

impression in Cambridge was that he was 'a sort of Dictionary of Dates with a leaning to scandal'. Manuscript work had special excitement for him because it exposed the shady under-side of a story. As he moved in the great world it obviously gave him a certain relish to hear the news of the back-stairs. The subjects and periods which early attracted him easily ran to 'secret history', to melodrama, to a game of detection. All this requires a knowledge of detail and is matter for the microscope. He could review books written by experts in one field after another, and would examine their handling of the documents or point out the sources that had been overlooked. Döllinger has been criticised for encouraging him to spread his knowledge over such long periods and such varied themes. The conditions governing historical activity in the middle of the nineteenth century provide part of the explanation for this.

What was remarkable, however, was the profit that he gained from collating the knowledge gathered from so many centuries — even when he showed this in its simplest form, the study of analogous cases, the love of making lists of them, the ability (when some issue was being discussed) to bring out the crucial instance which might decide a point of interpretation. He had attacked the work of Buckle in 1858, but, in 1867, he gave considerable praise to a French historian whom he described as a Positivist. On this occasion he said: 'Those who discover the laws contained in history, who show the regularity of forces and the distinction between chance and freedom will do more for a knowledge of great truths than Bossuet with his notion of arbitrary will and wisdom . . . not manifested in law'. His masses of historical notes are not merely annotations from books but reflections about history, comparisons of cases, analyses of movements, comments on the connections between events. He made himself a student of the historical process as such, and loved to expose the paradoxes in the process. Without attempting to poke the data into categories or into some framework that had been imposed from outside, he thought things out until he had brought the history itself to a higher level of generalization. With him, this part of historical reconstruction was itself a science, but a science *sui generis*, not built up by any attempt to make history analogous with other sciences.

Early he had acquired the habit of reflecting deeply on the long-term aspects of history and examining in a methodical manner the operation of conditioning circumstance; so that, like Ranke, when he studied anything in particular, he would be working to see it in its place in relation to everything else — to see where it stood in the whole complex of universal history. If it can be said that the historian studying any particular episode in a certain sense brings to bear upon that episode the whole of his knowledge of the past, the whole of his

experience as an historian — then, from this point of view, Acton focused a vast knowledge, and a knowledge turned into rich experience, upon any topic that he studied. Often his resources extended not merely to a familiarity with the given historical subject but to a grasp of the history of the historiography of that subject. His notes are greatly preoccupied with this theme, and his three big articles in the *English Historical Review* are primarily concerned with it. All this meant that he saw his historical subject-matter in many dimensions and his treatment would be rich in overtones.

We must add to this the fact that two things — both of which were in a sense simple and fundamental to him, though both at the same time existed in him as highly complicated systems of thought — held his utter devotion from the start. They were Catholicism and the doctrine of Liberty; and the co-existence of the two saved him from the over-simplifications of either the ecclesiastical historian or the secular liberal. The resulting tension provided the conditions for some of his finest historical thought; though one may wonder if it was not most rich and fructifying in his youth, before the time of disillusionment. Many of his well-known essays, many of the things which have made him seem relevant to the present-day, in the way that Burckhardt has come to seem relevant, were written before he was thirty, though they seem to show such a great maturity. Acton's two essays on the History of Liberty, which belong to the year 1877, draw much on the capital which he had accumulated in the earlier period. In a sense they represent the historical attitude of the youthful Acton, though particular opinions have been revised. The unpublished notes of Acton's early youth reveal some astonishing bigotries, but quite early he appears to have come under the influence of Eckstein, a Catholic Dane who was resident in France. Eckstein represented more liberal ideas and seems perhaps to have helped to create the dream of reconciling Catholicism and Liberalism. If the later Acton changed his politics and opinions, becoming more liberal, more progressive, more attached to the idea of progress, still he did not lose the historical-mindedness of the earlier period, or the feeling that he had acquired for the processes of history.

He held that the historian, who so easily makes a pattern of men like Martin Luther, and then so readily rejects the things that fail to conform to the pattern — as though the mind were letting them fall through a sieve — should be careful precisely to have eyes for the discrepant fact, even if this means recognizing inconsistencies in human beings. Only in this way could history and historical portraiture acquire richness or the student properly confront the issues before him. Even where his deepest feelings are involved, as in the case of religious persecution, Acton takes care not to dismiss the discrepant fact — it is just he who in an argument most quickly brings

to mind the crucial instance of the cruel persecutor who gave up his life by staying longer than anybody else to take care of a plague-stricken village.

He held also that the historian should make out a better case for opponents than they could ever have presented for themselves, giving rational form to motives that they never analysed and to reasons which they themselves never quite brought to the level of consciousness — not merely knowing the alien sets of ideas and being able to state them, but realizing how men thought and felt when they were living under such systems. If he broke the rules himself on occasion, or slipped into rigidities, as I think he did, still it was he who set us the standard by which we judge him in this respect.

It was the misfortune of his later development which caused him to become famous for mere erudition. It was the accident of his historical situation that made people remember him particularly as the apostle of a scientific method. He is essentially a thinker and holds a high place precisely because he is so much more than a technician — more capable, for example, than most historians of handling and analysing abstract ideas. He is a daring thinker — daring most of all in the higher reaches of his reflection upon the past — so that he often crowns his accumulated instances or clinches his argument with a startling paradox. The first historical fact which he put before Cambridge undergraduates in his *Lectures on Modern History* was the following. He said:

It was late in the thirteenth century that the psychology of Conscience was closely studied for the first time, and men began to speak of it as the audible voice of God, that never misleads or fails, and that ought to be obeyed always, whether enlightened or darkened, right or wrong.

Perhaps only those who have examined his manuscript notes can realize what a pivotal place this fact possesses in a complicated intellectual system, and by what route Acton came to place it there. At the conclusion of this first lecture of his he pointed out that there was one thing which caused more strife in the world than race or religion or the conflict of political ideas; and this was the tendency of power as such to expand indefinitely, transcending all barriers both at home and abroad, until met by superior forces. He described this as the law of the modern world, and we might say that if the twentieth century had understood the full implications of this thesis, well-meaning men in our time would have been saved from some terrible mistakes. Acton is memorable to us because he regarded historical thinking as so much more important than historical learning.

STEPHEN DUCK: THE WILTSHIRE PHENOMENON, 1705-1756

R. G. FURNIVAL

FORTUNE plays strange tricks with the fame of poets. Some who deserve to be perpetuated in memory are now all but forgotten. Over their works — passionate, grave, sensual, illuminating — oblivion grows like moss on a tombstone, obliterating even the simple facts of birth and death. Others whom it would be kinder to forget look out, no doubt with smugness, from that chintzy Purgatory to which school-room rhymesters are condemned, and smile approvingly as infant thumbs besmudge their verses. Fame is indeed largely a matter of chance. A good poet writes a bad set of verses; they are fossilized to music as a hymn, and his name is remembered by many for the wrong reason. A bad poet pulls off a spectacular platitude, and for ever afterwards his one poem blossoms forlornly in an arid anthology — an everlasting paper flower in a garden of tea-roses.

Ultimately, of course, all poets must be judged by their poetry. If a poet writes good poetry, he is a good poet and beyond the reach of the whims of any generation. His popularity may rise and fall like mercury as the critical and social climate changes (John Donne is a case in point) but his poetry endures. It is this ultimate act of critical judgment which tempers the random, hit-or-miss opinions of popular acclaim.

But the major difficulty in deciding whether a poet is worthy of remembrance lies in reaching a complete judgment of him. The poetry is the poet, but the poet is also a man — 'a man speaking to men', as Wordsworth roundly states. Does this mean, then, that in reaching our final estimate of a poet we must take into account not only his poems but also the life which engendered those poems? Must we ask not only 'What sort of a poet was he?' but 'What sort of a man was he?' If we ask this last question we are trying in effect to judge a poet not only by the poems which he wrote, but by the poems which he refrained from writing, or which it would have been impossible for him to write. Perhaps this is a good test of a poet. At any rate, this line of inquiry pushes back the narrow walls of so-called 'applied' or 'practical' criticism and allows the mind freedom to receive a rounded impression of a poet and his work.

Such a general approach is the most rewarding in the case of a poet like Stephen Duck. For any close examination of the psychological minutiae of his means, methods and motives would at once disqualify him from the title of poet. Let it be said at the outset that Duck is not a very good poet. By the standards of Shakespeare, Milton,

Wordsworth and Pope he shows up—let us be perfectly honest about it—rather badly. But those exacting critics who would straightway lock his works in a file marked 'Case Closed' would be, quite certainly, missing something. His poetry is only of average quality. He himself was quiet, retiring, unspectacular. Yet the poetry and the man and the time in which he lived all add up to something more than the total of their parts.

Stephen Duck may not have created what we now would designate great poetry. He created something else. He created a sensation.

Duck is an unfortunate poet. He is certainly unfortunate in his name, which makes him automatically a figure of fun, good material for the punster, and an object of kindly ridicule. If his first name had been Donald perhaps his fame would have endured longer than it has. For the truth is that few people, save a handful of scholars, know anything of him. Accounts of eighteenth century literature usually fob him off with some such vague tag as 'the Thresher Poet'; facts about his life are often wrongly stated. One eminent authority, for example, volunteers the astounding information that the Earl of Macclesfield came to the drawing-room of Queen Caroline in the year 1750, and, on bended knee, read Her Majesty the verses of the Thresher Poet. Her Majesty was thereupon so impressed that she forwarded the verses to Mr Pope, who was not quite so favourably impressed. We can only assume that all these interesting transactions took place on a higher spiritual plane, since Caroline had been dead for a baker's dozen of years and Pope had ended 'this long disease, my life' some six years before.

It is odd that Duck is not better known, for whatever his defects as a poet there can be no denying that he was a remarkable man, considered by some of his contemporaries to be a poet of the very first rank. Dr Alured Clarke, Prebendary of Winchester, and one of Duck's earliest sponsors, thought so highly of him that he could write to Mrs Clayton (afterwards Lady Sundon), that he and his friends considered 'the Thresher, with all his defects, a superior genius to Mr Pope'. This is praise indeed, for the 'wasp of Twickenham' could buzz out the finest couplets in the land. Dr Clarke was not alone in his high opinion of Stephen Duck. Some critics held that Duck's poem *The Thresher's Labour* was superior to Thomson's *Seasons*, while others considered the author of *The Shunnamite* to be the greatest poet of his age. In fact, only Duck himself seems to have preserved a sense of critical values about his own verses. His innate modesty prevented his head turning, and he countered the wild adulation he received by saying of his poems:

Gentlemen indeed . . . might like 'em, because they were made by a poor Fellow in a Barn; but . . . I know, as well as anybody, that they are not really good in themselves.

Who, then, was this strange 'Fellow in a Barn' who could excite such interest and wild admiration during his own time, and yet who is now entombed in that dark forgetfulness which surrounds the most minor poets of an age of minor poets? Duck lives on only in a footnote here and there, as a passing reference in Pope, or as an interesting freak to enliven the historian's tedious pages.

The frontispiece to one edition of his *Poems on Several Occasions* shows a face which is calm, intelligent and handsome, with a serene brow and large, untroubled eyes regarding the world with confidence and trust. Those Duck-detractors who look for a grinning effigy of rustic oafishness are due for a sad disappointment. It is the face of an honest, sincere, and intelligent man. Fortunately we can build up a picture of his life from the hints and statements of that tireless collector of oddities and anecdotes, Joseph Spence; and what Spence has told us of Duck endorses the first favourable impression of his likeness.

Spence, scholar and country parson, was born at Kingsclere in Hampshire. It came to his notice that there was an unusual man living not far away, in the small Wiltshire village of Charlton. This man, so the rumour ran, was by necessity a thresher and by vocation a poet of no small skill. Spence's interest, always eager for news of 'natural genius' buried in out-of-the-way places, was aroused. He rode over to see the phenomenon, made a firm friend of him (he always talks of 'my friend Stephen'), encouraged him to write verses, and was instrumental in seeing that they were published. It is from his *Full and Authentick Account* of Stephen Duck that we draw the bulk of our knowledge concerning this strange, somewhat pathetic person.

Duck was born in 1705 'of Parents remarkable only for their Honesty and Industry'. He was one of a family whose heritage was a tedium of poverty and the incessant labour which the land exacts. As such he could look forward to a lifetime of backbreaking toil, a spawn of hungry children, poor conditions, and meagre rewards. His education, of course, was scanty. At the little village school he learnt the reading and writing of his mother tongue, plus 'a little Share' of arithmetic. When he reached the age of 14 he was taken from school following 'a very notable Complaint exhibited against him by the Schoolmaster, viz. That he took his Learning too fast, even faster than the Master could give it him. So that the prudent Parent, to prevent so growing an Evil, removed her Son from School to the Plow, lest he might become too fine a Gentleman for the Family that produced him.' Accordingly Stephen was set to work on a local farm, where he busied himself with 'the several lowest Employments of a Country Life', at the princely wage of 4s. 6d. a week. He was, however, a cut above the average run of farm labourers, and he was

not content to drudge out the rest of his days in the lowest employments of a country life. Some small, creative germ began to fret his brain and he became increasingly anxious because, like so many of us, he had forgotten everything he had been taught at school. As Spence remarks, Duck had 'a certain Longing after Knowledge' which led him, at the age of nineteen, to embark on a rigorous course of self-education. Mrs Duck's precautions were too late — 'the Seeds of Learning being once sowed in our young Plowman, there was no possibility of weeding them out. . . .'

In the same year, 1724, he married his first wife and began to found his family. Although he was now beset with the additional worry of providing for a wife, Duck's determination did not waver. His wife, a simple rustic wench, did not understand either poetry or her husband, and her lack of sympathy must have been trying, to say the least, for Duck. We are told that when he was endeavouring to scan his lines '... she would oftentimes run out and raise the whole Neighbourhood, telling the People, that her Husband dealt with the Devil and was going mad, because he did nothing all day but talk to himself and tell his Fingers'. Nevertheless, Duck braved ridicule and persevered. He worked overtime at his threshing in order to 'get some little Matter added to his Pay' with which to buy books. First he purchased a book of 'Vulgar Arithmetick', then one of Decimal, 'and a third of Measuring of Land' (geometry), '... all of which' adds Spence, 'he made himself a tolerable Master of, in those Hours he could steal from his Sleep, after the labours of the Day'. Spence comments, with some justice, that 'where there was such a Desire for Knowledge, there must be good Sense at bottom, and a Soul, at least, somewhat above the common Conversation he must meet with in his poor State of Life'.

But a will to learn is not in itself sufficient to fit a man for the service of poetry. He must possess, first, the soul of a poet, the ability to see things in a poetic way, with that sharp, imaginative vision and intuitive power which does not transform them but rather sees them exactly as they are, in all their truth. He must be endowed, too, with a sense of words, an innate tact in their manipulation, a sensitivity to their shaping, to the shifting patterns of harmonious sounds. Duck did not possess these qualities by gift in abundance, but he set out, painstakingly and methodically, to acquire them. His genius was not a glorious blaze of light and warmth, but a constantly reiterated spark. He was a member of that ragged regiment of 'natural geniuses' which numbers in its ranks Burns, Clare, Yearsley, Blacklock, Taylor and Smart, all of whom wrote poetry — in many cases fine poetry — direct from the heart, with no gilding of education, no special training for their art. Taylor says of his own lack of education:

I must confess I do want eloquence,
 And scarce did learn my accidence;
 For having got from possum to posset,
 I there was gravell'd, could no further get.

Duck, too, having worked his way through the *Vulgar Arithmetick* to the *Book of Measuring of Land*, might also have been gravell'd, but for a lucky accident. For living in Charlton was a man who, like himself, had an inclination towards books and a soul 'somewhat above the common Conversation'. Further, this man had been in service in London, and by saving and by gift had gathered together a small, strange library. This consisted of the Bible, *Paradise Lost*, a few volumes of the *Spectator*, a translation of *Telemachus*, Addison's *Defence of Christianity*, an English dictionary, 'a sort of English Grammar', an Ovid, Bysse's *Art of Poetry*, Seneca's *Morals*, a volume of Shakespeare containing seven plays, Epictetus, Waller, Dryden's Virgil, *Hudibras*, *The London Spy*, and the poems of Matthew Prior.

It is an oddly-assorted collection of books for two scarcely literate countrymen to study by candlelight after a hard day's work in the fields. Yet Duck and his anonymous friend, to whom he refers as 'Menalcas' in the poems, threw themselves on their pile of books with enormous gusto, arguing each point which arose with great shrewdness. They read through *Paradise Lost* '...twice or thrice', riddling it out with the aid of their dictionary — an immense labour, but one which bore fruit a few years later, for Milton, above all other poets, teaches the use of words in their exact and original meanings. Duck learnt what he knew of English poetry in much the same way as a schoolboy learns Latin. That is to say, with a mind clear of cant and a brain as yet undimmed he attacked the printed words until they yielded up their meaning. He crammed his days and nights with reading. When he went into the fields to mow it was his custom to take a volume of the *Spectator* with him, tucked into his shirt. He mowed faster than any of his fellows, raced ahead of them, and sat down in the shade of a hedge to read for half an hour or so. It was the 'Copies of Verses scatter'd in those Pieces' which first inspired him to venture into verse himself: short, faltering excursions on tottering feet which, like a good young poet, he sacrificed to the flames. Later he was to publish a long, inferior poem of his own, 'Avaro and Amanda', in the pages he so greatly admired.

After five years of conscientious study during which his mind matured and his knowledge increased step by step with his family, his fortune changed. He was now the father of three children, and his young wife was worn out with constant drudgery and child-birth.

But his fame spread locally. He was known to the villagers as a magician who could conjure up a neat rhyming spell if the occasion demanded. It was the christening of his third child which made Duck's fame burst through the parish boundaries and sweep on to Oxford and London and the rest of the country. For at that ceremony one of the womenfolk 'happen'd to blab it out . . . That Mr. Duck was a Man of great Learning, and had Wit enough to be a Parson; for that he could make Verses like any mad . . .' Upon this strong recommendation the local personages — the squire, the schoolmaster, the parson — began to encourage him to write, and to criticize what he did write. His particular friends among the gentry were the Reverend and Mrs Stanley, who encouraged him to write two of his best poems, *The Thresher's Labour* and *The Shunnamite*. Then, in 1729, a 'young gentleman of Oxford' sent for Duck and commanded him to write a verse-epistle, afterwards published in his poems.

This was the turning of the tide. Duck's fame spread rapidly and eventually came to the notice of the Queen herself — Caroline, eager to patronize the arts, ill-acquainted with the English language, with a husband, George II, who hardly ever opened a book and rarely spoke the tongue of the country he ruled.

Caroline had a genuine wish to improve the lot of the talented writers who were so abundant in her reign. Most of them scratched out a living by hiring their pens to one political faction or another, and most of them were engaged in an endless literary gang-warfare, trying desperately to out-rival each other in vituperation and insult. Caroline's good intent, however, was thwarted by Walpole, who had set his face against the employment of writers by the State, and the only way in which Caroline could reward was by offering preferment in the Church. Dean Swift had already been slighted by her, so he thought, over some trivial question of a medallion and a living, both of which had been promised but were never forthcoming; and she had fallen out with Gay over the question of *Polly*, the successor to the popular Newgate Pastoral, *The Beggars' Opera*. But Stephen Duck was a different matter. He was not of the power of Swift or Gay, who were men to be feared, but a man of modest upbringing and carriage, unlikely to be seduced into pillorying her Ministers of State, or, what was more to the point, turning his pen against her own august person.

So, when Dr Clarke and Lady Sundon introduced Duck to the Court at Windsor, Her Majesty was ready to be charmed both by the man and by his verses, which brought into the heady atmosphere of high society and intrigue the earthy tang of a life spent in the open air. Through the good graces of the Queen and his growing band of titled subscribers Duck published a pamphlet of verses which

enjoyed a great success, running into seven editions. But the success of the poor poet excited the envy and spleen of some of his more illustrious contemporaries, who considered that the royal favours he received were due to themselves. In 1730, after the appearance of Duck's first pamphlet, Gay wrote to Swift that he did not envy 'the phenomenon of Wiltshire' who was now 'the fortunate poet of the Court'. Swift, smarting under his half-imaginary neglect, answered with the news that Duck was well in the running for the Laureateship, then held by Eusden, and added a scurrilous epigram:

The thresher Duck could o'er the Queen prevail:
The proverb says, 'No fence against a flail',
From threshing corn he turns to thresh his brains
For which Her Majesty allows him grains,
Though 'tis confess'd that those who ever saw
His poems think them all not worth a straw.
Thrice-happy Duck! employed in threshing stubble
Thy toils were lessen'd and thy profits doubled.

Despite Swift's malice this was sudden fame indeed — from thresher to candidate for the national laurels in the space of a few years.

However, at the first wave of success tragedy befell Duck. His wife died in 1730, leaving him at the head of a hungry family. He mourned her death in a touching verse-dialogue with Menalcas, *A Pastoral Elegy*:

Another Loss I could content have born,
But must the Loss of Sylvia always mourn.
My lovely Sylvia was my softest Theme,
My Song by Day, by Night my pleasing Dream . . .

But his personal loss was at least partly assuaged by his public success, by the new and exciting life he was leading. The summer corn-fields and the hot, dusty business of threshing, so vividly described in *The Thresher's Labour*, were far behind. He passed his days in Court circles, writing flattering pieces for whichever nobleman rendered him favours. (He applied himself to this by-product of poetry so assiduously that in the edition of 1736 he had collected nearly six hundred subscribers of title or high degree.) Three years after the death of 'my lovely Sylvia' he married Sarah Big, the Queen's housekeeper at Kew, and Caroline made him a Yeoman of the Guard. Then, in 1735, he advanced still further, being appointed Keeper of the Queen's Library at Richmond, picturesquely named Merlin's Cave. It was here that Pope, who loved grottos and grotesquerie, would walk and talk with the young poet, defending him from the malicious attacks of the less favoured. Pope thought little of Duck's verses, but in those last days of his life when he was

casting about him for sympathy, for real companionship, he took warmly to Duck as a personal friend. Perhaps he saw in the slower-witted man the perfect foil for his own nimble wit; perhaps he pitied Duck, or perhaps he wished to push him an inch further towards that shining perfection which he himself had attained. But Pope's last words are said to be: 'There is nothing that is meritorious but virtue and friendship, and indeed, friendship itself is but a part of virtue'. Surely the truth of the matter is that Pope was drawn to Duck because he saw in him (the author of a feeling poem on 'Friendship') what everyone seemed to find in him — virtue and friendship and perfect sincerity.

Duck had always had a leaning towards the Church, and shortly before his time at Merlin's Cave, 'a small but choice collection of books', as Pope describes the library, he had been ordained as a literate by the Bishop of Salisbury. Thus he had risen by degrees from thresher to lionized poet, thence to Yeoman, from the Yeomanry to the Church, from the pulpit to the charge of a Royal Library. He did not end his career there, but in 1751 became the Royal Preacher at Kew Chapel, and a year later obtained the Rectorship of Byfleet in Surrey, where his old benefactor Spence had settled two years previously. This was his last preferment.

What effect did this abrupt rise from poverty and obscurity to fame and relative fortune — for he had early been granted a comfortable pension by Caroline — have on Duck? On his writings the effect was considerable. He was rarely better than a competent versifier — but then so few poets of the time were — and the effect of his transfer from barnyard to Court was to make him polish his crude rustic lines, with their rather clumsy attempts at genteel ornamentation, into an imitation of the witty cameos of other urban poets. In the 'Court' poems Duck substitutes for the earlier, naive sincerity of *The Thresher's Labour* and *The Shunnamite* a smooth veneer of wit and verbiage. It is a poetry of externals and superficial values — everything depends upon a good 'surface' — meant to be glanced at in an idle moment rather than experienced. Duck's rapid rise to fame, his sudden sharp contact with a wider world, had a vitiating effect because it prevented him from working out his own salvation as a poet. To use a crude metaphor, when he was left to his own devices with no other guide but 'a sort of English grammar', a copy of *Paradise Lost*, and his own mother wit in his small cottage, he spat on his hands and attacked poetry with a pick and shovel, laboriously digging his way through the dross in order to grasp that small nugget of truth which all poets prize: the exactly right image, the unique word which shocks, delights, stimulates the mind, the revelation which opens up new continents of feeling. But afterwards, when he came into touch with polite poets, he exchanged

his pick-axe for a tooth-pick and his shovel for a tea-spoon. And who is to blame him, for, together with a pen steeped in vitriol, these were the implements of the day?

The admirable quality of Duck's earlier verse is its patent sincerity — an accent not often heard in eighteenth century poetry. This is allied with a sense of reality — we feel in such a passage as the following, for example, that Duck is speaking from direct experience (as indeed he was):

When sooty Pease we thresh, you scarce can know
Our native Colour, as from Work we go:
The Sweat, the Dust, the suffocating Smoak
Make us so much like Ethiopians look,
We scare our Wives, when Evening brings us Home;
And frighted Infants think the Bugbear come . . .

The closing passage of *The Shunnamite* in simple praise of God is effective:

Holy and good art Thou, Lord God of Host,
And all thy Works are wonderful and just:
Both Life and Death are in thy pow'rful Hand;
Both Life and Death obey thy great Command . . .

Later, this sincerity and directness are overlaid by other, less valuable qualities: the pseudo-cynicism of the Popish verse *On Mites*:

Dear Madam, did you never gaze,
Thro' Optic-glass on rotten Cheese?
There, Madam, did you ne'er perceive
A Crowd of dwarfish Creatures live?
The little Things, elate with Pride,
Strut to and fro, from Side to Side:
In tiny Pomp, and pertly vain,
Lords of their pleasing Orb, they reign . . .

Or in this Epigram, 'Words Are But Wind':

If Words are Wind, as some allow,
No Promises can bind;
Since breaking of the strictest Vow
Is only breaking Wind.

This is indeed a long way from the spiritual afflatus of *The Shunnamite*.

Duck is usually moderately successful in the polished and urban style of versification, but occasionally he suffers a sickening Icarus-fall, as in the *Spectator* poem, 'Avaro and Amanda', a very moral story of a youth, Avaro, who tries to get rich quickly by selling his

dark-skinned lover, Amanda, into slavery. Amanda, quite naturally, upbraids him for this mercenary approach, reproaching him in the name of their unborn son. Far from repenting, Avaro promptly doubles her price, on the grounds that she is potentially two slaves instead of one:

He, for the Child, demands a larger Sum;
And sells it, while an Embryo in the Womb . . .

This profiteer comes to no good, however, being first shipwrecked and ultimately devoured by a none too fastidious wolf, who:

Tore out his Heart, and lick'd the purple Flood;
For Earth refus'd to drink the Villain's Blood . . .

This poem is all blood, thunder and tears: the blood is merely raspberry jam, the tears glycerine, the thunder the booming of a tin sheet. Fortunately Duck could not sustain this strain for long, and he never really attempts it again.

His virtues as a poet are the virtues of the man: simplicity, honesty of purpose, a desire to learn, the will to work hard, and an unquestioning religious faith. His vices are those of the age which produced him: the rejection of sincerity for wit, a tendency to fulsome flattery, a rigidity of poetic design, and the outlook which praises a poet rather than his poems, and his poems first for their construction, the fabric of the words themselves, secondly for their content, but rarely attempts to judge a poem as the perfect indissoluble fusion of form and content.

To some extent Duck may be described as a 'natural genius'. Had his genius been stronger and less imitative, he might have added to the store of nature poetry which goes beyond nature. Had he been able to lose consciousness of the prevailing literary conditions and write *himself* he might today rank even higher than Thomson, as he did during his own age. (But then — had Keats lived a few years longer he might have written Shakespeare, and then where would our comparative criticism be?) But this is asking too much of any poet, that he should forget his surroundings, even the very air he breathes, let alone a 'poor Fellow in a Barn'. He failed to be great, although he had a reputation for greatness, but he tried his best, having as his ideal his first love, *Paradise Lost*. This is a high endeavour, and if we are to believe Browning's Gigadibs enough to claim Duck a high place:

'But try', you urge, 'the trying shall suffice;
The aim, if reached or not, makes great the life:
Try to be Shakespeare, leave the rest to fate'.

To which Duck might have answered in Blougram's words:

Spare my self-knowledge — there's no fooling me!

... 'I know, as well as anybody, that they are not really good in themselves'...

Stephen could never rival Milton; the duck never achieved the grace of the swan, as one of his learned admirers wished him to. For he could never forget his humble origins, and was always worried about his lack of a formal education. He taught himself Latin and produced some passable Imitations of Horace and an excellent Paraphrase of Ovid. But in the end the strain of trying constantly to live and write above his station told on him. He was not destined to live out his life in '... power, peace, pleasantness and length of days'. He wrote less and less, brooded more and more, until at last he was visited with such a fit of black dejection that his mind was swamped with melancholy; a fate which was also that of Smart, Clare and Collins. On March 21st, 1756, he drowned himself in a trout stream 'behind the Black Lion Inn' at Reading.

So the story of the poor thresher who achieved great fame and sufficient fortune while he lived ended in suicide — the bad rhyme to end a life which did not scan. Now he is forgotten. His verses alone are not strong enough to stand as a lasting memorial; but it must be remembered that during his life he set the literary and fashionable world humming with excitement. Lord Palmerston, one of his patrons, admired him so greatly that he set aside a piece of land the rent of which was to provide an annual feast for the threshers of Duck's birth-place, in commemoration of the poet who rose from their midst. Duck describes one of the feasts, given on June 30th every year, in a poetic account of a journey he made back to the fields where he had worked and read as a boy. In 1869 the rent of Palmerston's Piece was valued at £2 9s. 9d., and the annual dinner was still given at the local inn for all the adult males of Charlton.

Duck deserves to be remembered simply as a man who could enter, singularly unfitted for the ordeal, one of the most brilliant and exacting literary societies England has ever fostered and emerge unscathed, personally unspoilt, with a record clear of rancour. He valued his friends and never struck out in anger at his enemies. It is fitting that Spence, his faithful Boswell, should speak the final judgement on him:

'What every body seems to admire him for is, that he seems to have an excellent moral Turn in his Thoughts. He is, as I told you before, something of a Philosopher; and, what is better than a Philosopher, a good, honest-hearted Man.'

BOOK REVIEWS

B. IFOR EVANS: *The Language of Shakespeare's Plays*. Methuen, 18s. net.

At least one reviewer, writing in an influential publication, has acclaimed this book as an outstanding contribution to Shakespeare studies. Confronted with a passage like the following, this is not an opinion I can share.

Twelfth Night gathers into itself all that is most fragrant in the romantic comedies, and the fulness of its perfection can only be discovered by examining the whole action, its characters, and the neat arrangement of its situations. Its language is more distinguished than that of *As You Like It*, for while the matter and methods of the comic scenes remain much the same, and though prose retains an important place, there is now a more prominent and pleasing use of verse. While little may be original yet the total effect of the language is different from that in any of the preceding plays (p. 87).

'Most fragrant', 'fulness of its perfection', 'distinguished', 'more prominent and pleasing use of verse', these smooth counters of appreciation are not what we expect from a critic of Dr Evans's experience. In a first-year student's essay they might pass muster, but even then the tutor would ask: 'Well, how *does* the total effect of the language in *Twelfth Night* differ from that in any of the preceding plays?' Dr Evans does not supply an answer. Instead, he first suggests that much of the language *looks back* to the idiom of the Sonnets and that the rural element of *As You Like It* remains. He then goes on to say that 'it is not in the imagery itself but in the mastery and control of the blank verse as a dramatic instrument that the strength lies'. So it is not the language, after all, but the versification that gives *Twelfth Night* its superiority. Here Dr Evans does quote a few examples to bear out his contention, but even then he makes no comparisons with the verse of the earlier plays to show wherein the difference lies.

This failure to come to grips with the details of his subject is evident throughout the book. Nor is it so original an approach as he would have us believe. To take but one example, what he says about Shakespeare as a critic of language has already been said by Miss Gladys Willcock.¹ Moreover, while it is true that 'the literature . . . on Shakespeare's use of language is small', compared with the number of studies of other aspects of his art, the quality of the criticism devoted to his language is very high indeed. There is great variety in it too, since it stretches from the mystical and symbolical interpretations of Wilson Knight to the painstaking word-counts of Professor Caroline Spurgeon. Dr Evans claims a place for his contribution on the grounds that it emphasizes 'that language in drama must be referred to the effect that it can make in the theatre', but I fail to see that this claim has been made good. At one moment we are asked to look at the content of the imagery and the next at the movement of the verse, but page after page can be turned without finding any attempt to relate what is being said or the manner of its saying to the effect that it is intended to have on the audience. Nor is Dr Evans always concerned to relate speech to character, though the chapter on *Hamlet*, in many ways the best in the book, shows some awareness of this aspect of the matter.

Even here, however, there are some curious failures of critical awareness. In spite of Hamlet's 'these tedious old fools', and his 'foolish prating knave', Dr Evans would have us believe that there is an 'unacknowledged bond of intellectual sympathy between Polonius and Hamlet'. His evidence? That Polonius shows a critical interest in language'. He instances the scene with the players.

¹ G. D. Willcock, *Shakespeare as Critic of Language*, Shakespeare Association, 1934.

When Hamlet declaims a speech of 'the rugged Pyrrhus' it is Polonius who comments, 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good accent and good discretion'... and later, when the player takes up the speech, he comments that it is too long, and again seizes on the phrase 'the mobled queen': 'That's good; "mobled queen", is good'... (p. 96).

But this is to misread the evidence entirely. First, Polonius comments on Hamlet's elocution, not on the content of the speech. Hamlet himself seems to approve the speech, certainly, but this is of a piece with the genuine welcome he gives the players, a welcome shared with Horatio, with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (until he finds that they were sent for), in fact with anything from the happier life he led before his father's death. Even the mediocre verse is not unwelcome as a distraction for the moment, but only for the moment. Hamlet's critical faculties soon take command once more. He pricks up his ears at the bombastic 'mobled queen' which Polonius approves of. This alone is sufficient to condemn the phrase, and so far from making for an intellectual bond between the two men, it puts them in opposite camps. Polonius is 'for a jig, or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps'.

It would be tedious to multiply examples of one's disagreement with Dr Evans's judgments. One further point shall suffice.

... in *Love's Labour's Lost* one of the best remembered passages is found in Proteus's four lines:

O, how this spring of love resembleth
The uncertain glory of an April day.
Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,
And by and by a cloud takes all away!

We may begrudge these beautiful lines to Proteus, a false perjured man. They seem to belong to the wash of fine words to be discovered in many of the comedies, as if Shakespeare were using a lyricism and making a gift of his own mind and thoughts to any character who might be available (p. 25).

Here is one error in critical method and one downright misleading statement. The error is that also committed by Saintsbury when he asked why the poetry is destroyed 'for no apparent reason' if the words 'fickle splendour' are substituted for 'uncertain glory', the error of dealing with only a part of a complete speech in order to submit it to an analysis which takes no account of its interconnections with the whole passage. The lines quoted by Dr Evans are preceded by these:

Thus have I shunn'd the fire for fear of burning,
And drench'd me in the sea, where I am drowned.
I fear'd to show my father Julia's letter,
Lest he should take exception to my love;
And with the vantage of mine own excuse
Hath he excepted most against my love.

The concluding lines may be beautiful by themselves, but taken as part of the whole speech they are a sententious conclusion to it, a fact emphasized by shaping the lines into a quatrain. It is true that the language is not quite so plainly that of the study as in Proteus's earlier:

Yet writers say, as in the sweetest bud
The eating canker dwells, so eating love
Inhabits in the finest wits of all,

but it is not far removed from it when taken in conjunction with the fire and sea images of the first two lines of the speech, and to consider the quatrain in isolation as one of the 'beauties of Shakespeare' is quite illegitimate.

The misleading statement in this judgment is that we may begrudge these lines to Proteus because he is 'a false perjured man'. This is to be wise after the event. At the end of Act I Proteus is not yet perjured, and as a sententious young man who has discovered that the course of true love does not run smooth has a perfect right to these lines.

Finally, one apparent slip of the pen must be pointed out. In spite of giving the correct act-scene-line reference to Hamlet's speech on 'What a piece of work is man', Dr Evans says that it is spoken *after* the play scene.

D. S. BLAND

BERNARD MAYO: *The Logic of Personality*. Cape, 10s. 6d. net.

'What does it mean to know a person?' is Mr Mayo's central question, and his discussion of it is likely to excite and puzzle the reader. To puzzle him, partly because Mr Mayo appears out of the void — except for the readers of *Mind*, *Analysis*, etc. His book (a first book) has no preface, no notes, no index, no acknowledgments, and makes no reference to any contemporary writers except Miss Compton Burnett, James Joyce, Professor Macmurray and Bertrand Russell. These references are all we have — except the Dewey Classification Number — to help us to 'place' the book. It is likely to excite the reader because it centres on an important and out-of-the-ordinary problem which really matters to the non-philosopher; and because in pursuing his question, Mr Mayo makes many striking and original statements. Some of these statements seem to me to be original mistakes and some of them to be beside the point. This is evidently the work of an enthusiastic young author who cannot bear to leave anything out. It seems to me a promising work as well as one worthwhile on its own account.

Mr Mayo begins by recognizing that we have a way of knowing our friends and enemies which is very unlike our way of knowing scientific facts or theories. We are acquainted with our friends, we know them not by description but by intercourse with them. Of course if we know them personally we can describe them: we can rehearse the abstract properties which they share with other things and other people, and the quirks and traits which are peculiarly theirs. But while such a description might give someone else a great deal of knowledge about the man we know, it will not begin to let anyone else have this knowledge by acquaintance. This last phrase (Mr Mayo says) has been used in a most misleading sense by recent philosophers. They use it for awareness of what is given in a moment of perception and never repeated: while in fact we talk of having knowledge by acquaintance only with persons, places and things we have previously become acquainted with — which come to us feeling familiar. There is then some puzzle about our knowledge of persons: and the author goes on to show that there is a very similar puzzle about our knowledge of places and things. He invites us to take this problem seriously. Personality is 'unique': in personal intercourse we are encountering an actual and unique thing. Our whole apparatus of informative language, analytical logic and experimental technique has been built up for the purposes of knowledge by description — to enable us to describe objects in their absence. But we also use language in presence of the object itself: not to describe it (since that would be redundant) but to come to terms with it, to address it, to express our enjoyment or repugnance, to glorify or to mollify it. Mr Mayo's theme is that we can understand personal acquaintance best by studying these fundamental non-descriptive uses of language; in ancient lore, in ritual and art, and in many of our own less rational and deliberate utterances. Acquaintance is an 'I-thou' relationship — even acquaintance with a place or a tree or a fountain or a fountain-pen. And what distinguishes knowledge of a person from knowledge of a place or tree, is that only in the first case may the relationship be reciprocal.

So far so good: Mr Mayo's account of primitive and personal ways of thought

and action makes suggestions that help us to understand the notion of acquaintance. He has besides an amiable but unguarded admiration for the primitive, the childish and the fanciful, which will make the book congenial to many. But few will be able to accept his later conclusions on art, language, logic, morality and the immortality of the soul. His discussion on the relation of feeling to knowing, and on the nature of morality, seem to me to lead him to an *Urdummheit* in which all moral obligations are strictly optional and the relation of evidence to belief almost equally so. This condition may be very charming and unsophisticated but I do not really think that Mr Mayo can stay there. We may expect him in due course to put forward a more moderate version of his conclusions.

KARL BRITTON

H. RICHARD NIEBUHR: *Christ and Culture*. Faber & Faber, 21s. net.

To say with the Fourth Gospel that Christians are in the world but not of the world is to raise the problem of the relation of Christ to culture and at the same time to suggest certain conditions which any theologically satisfying answer must fulfil. The Christian is not called to abandon the relativities of human culture; his life is and remains conditioned by them throughout. But he is called to submit everything so conditioned to the judgment and claims of the Unconditioned, and thus to prevent any relativity from becoming a false absolute. The Christian therefore — and, as the author of this deeply reflective book points out, 'Christianity, whether defined as church, creed, ethic or movement of thought, itself moves between the poles of Christ and culture' — may not give an absolute Yes or an absolute No to any cultural phenomenon. To set Christ against culture is as mistaken, though probably in actual fact not as disastrous, as to subordinate Christ to culture. On the other hand, it is often a lapse into the latter false idolatry that has produced the other false extreme as a historically needed counterblast.

It is from some such viewpoint as this that Richard Niebuhr surveys his problem. He distinguishes, examines and criticizes five typical answers that have been given from time to time in the history of the Church. This method of classification is bound, as Niebuhr admits, to involve an element of falsification and the omission of individual subtleties and variations, and it is perhaps a little surprising to find St Paul and Luther in one group, Augustine, Calvin and F. D. Maurice in another. But the hope is expressed that 'the method of typology, though historically inadequate, has the advantage of calling to attention the continuity and significance of the great *motifs* that appear and reappear in the long wrestling of Christians with their enduring problem'. This hope is amply justified by the results.

Three of the five types distinguished are to be found in what we may call the central stream of Christian thought. The other two go to the extreme and attempt to overcome one of the two points of tension, either losing Christ in culture, or else utterly condemning culture in the interests of Christ. The three main types are best represented by Aquinas, Luther and Augustine respectively, and are distinguished according as Christ is thought to complete, to oppose (though without overcoming), or to transform culture. Great skill and insight is shown in drawing out the resemblances and differences between the types. It is good to see the prominent position allotted to F. D. Maurice as a representative of the 'conversionist' theme by an American theologian.

Because of his conviction that human reason is essentially relative in its conclusions Niebuhr refrains from judging between these different themes, maintaining that each has a contribution to make. It is noticeable, however, that he makes hardly any adverse criticism of the conversionist theme, and one suspects that his sympathies lie largely here. However formal a principal it may

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be, the conversionist theme contains within itself both the negative and the positive, the ideas of judgment and of redemption; and to this extent we may say that it is more adequate than the others. It is true that, because it is formal and ambivalent, it cannot absolve us from the painful necessity of making specific decisions on specific occasions, and these will sometimes be for, sometimes against specific cultural phenomena. No prior theoretical solution is possible in this sense; but theory may perhaps go a little further than Niebuhr is willing to admit.

In place of a theoretical conclusion we are given a fascinating and valuable reflection on the nature of such decisions, a 'concluding unscientific postscript' in which the position of Kierkegaard is appraised and corrected. The individual has to make his decisions on insight, faith and values which are partial and relative; but at the same time, if we acknowledge our inescapable relation to the absolute God-in-Christ, 'with the little faith that we have in the faithfulness of God, we can make the decisions of little faith with sure confidence'. The individualism of Kierkegaard is replaced by a social existentialism, and his disregard for history by a realization of man's historical existence. 'The Christian confronts a compresent, contemporaneous Christ; but this Christ has a history, he is remembered and he is expected.' Man's freedom is exercised within an area of ultimate dependence.

This book is full of good things. It contains many arresting thoughts, and its tightly packed sentences often possess an almost epigrammatic force and pungency. Whereas his brother Reinhold is more of a prophet, Richard is more of a scholar. His mind is more reflective, his style less diffuse. But together they provide, each in his own way, a rich and rewarding theological banquet.

PETER BAEZ

WALTER REHM: *Nachsommer, Zur Deutung von Stifters Dichtung*. Francke, Berne.

This is a characteristic example of a type of writing-about-literature which has latterly become very fashionable. It cannot strictly be termed literary criticism, because it does not criticize, offering neither assessment nor interpretation. It consists of meditations by the author on some literary work or some literary figure, meditations which themselves are cast in a form which has literary pretensions. It must needs have little significance for the reader unacquainted with the subject, for it presumes considerable knowledge on his part; and the reader who knows the subject, will be more interested in the mind that is meditating. If this be a Hugo von Hofmannsthal or a Virginia Woolf, the meditation may be absorbingly interesting. Otherwise the artistic expectations which it arouses may well remain unsatisfied. What Professor Rehm here offers us, is a long essay on the associations aroused by the word *Nachsommer*. It is really 'thinking-about-Stifter', but it is thinking which any attentive reader of *Der Nachsommer* will certainly have gone through of his own account. If we know the novel, we have heard all this before, much better said by Stifter himself. If not, then Professor Rehm is hardly likely to drive us to the novel, for he is far too concerned with saying things exquisitely himself, to do true justice to the great writer which is his subject. The final section of the essay draws a comparison between Stifter and Jakob Burckhardt which is very interesting indeed. It is to this, the more conventionally scholarly part of the essay, that most readers will probably wish to return.

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prepared to regard a series of printed scripts as a *book*? For the second time within the past eighteen months, we are offered a printed symposium on this subject by dealers and bibliographers. Books of this kind undoubtedly have an appeal to those who have already enjoyed the spoken versions. Yet there is a danger of the memory of speakers' inflections and mannerisms becoming indispensable condiments to the act of reading. How pleasant it would be at some bibliographical house-party to *play-read* these talks. Would anyone be found with the right sort of cravat to carry off Mr Muir's flow of language — or with the ability to recapture Mr Goldschmidt's cosmopolitan charm? But the talks under review were not intended to be used frivolously. The publisher reminds us that these 'discourses' were selected from a series of lectures organized by the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association with two objectives in view: first to introduce young booksellers to certain accepted theories and practices of their trade, and, secondly to emphasize the large degree of identity between the interest of booksellers and book-collectors.

The second objective is gained with pyrotechnical brilliance by Mr John Carter in a contribution which unlike the others is not (except for a few paragraphs) the address actually delivered. He gives an expansion of his paper on 'Fashions in Book-Collecting' which might otherwise have remained unnoticed in a small American review by all except the *cognoscenti*. Mr Howard Nixon exposes with relish some myths concerning binders and binding, whilst his fellow-librarian Mr Simon Nowell-Smith urbanely expounds the language of book-collecting. Dr. Weil and Messrs. Goldschmidt and Kyrle-Fletcher attractively convey their enthusiasm and their learning in a manner which does credit to their trade, whilst Mr Muir fulfils his declared aim of indicating the wide range of book-collecting by ranging widely and at length, with a good fund of anecdotes. The book has been agreeably produced with more generous margins and illustrations than are usually found at 12s. 6d.

JOHN DREYFUS

ROSEMOND TUVE: *A Reading of George Herbert. Faber & Faber, 25s. net.*

Contemporary poets have owed much to the Metaphysicals. It was Mr Eliot, of course, who drew their attention to the arduous delights to be found in a combination of Love and cooking smells, Spinoza and the sound of a typewriter in the next room; poetry must be comprehensive, allusive, a mechanism of sensibility capable of devouring any kind of experience, which might well involve examination of the cerebral cortex, the nervous system and the digestive tracts; if it did not succeed in continually forming new wholes something dreadful might happen to it, and the portentous phrase 'dissociation of sensibility' would almost certainly have to be used. Whether poets worked out closely knit theories of their function or not, this sort of advice told on them: furthermore they read in Coleridge of the structural interdependence of a poem, and Coleridge was intellectual enough and neurotic enough to be their Prince Hamlet — he used words like *esemplastic* and *co-adunating* which were as exciting as anything in Freud or Jung and, in the midst of endless theorizing, fell asleep and wrote the greatest dream poem in the language. Besides, Professor Richards approved of him, and Professor Richards was a scientist and psychologist who spoke of the equilibrium to be achieved among jangling impulses, and paved the way for Mr Empson's gritty analysis. A scientific age approved of clearing away 'irrelevant' moral, social and historical considerations and seeing the poem as a thing in itself, obeying its own laws and to be appreciated on its own organizational terms; the chaos of *The Waste Land* focused this interest upon the dialectic tension of the seventeenth century where anxiety had found cogs and gears, and drove a great number of efficient machines. (Donne's sturdy lumbering cranks and pyrotechnic fly-wheels, Herbert's tussle, push and eventual happy sigh, Vaughan's

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star-lit dynamo, Crashaw's slim skyward chromium.) If there was hysteria about it could fasten upon conceits carried to their farthest limit or achieving their effect by agile leaps and sudden shocks — better than Dada; if masochism, there was something sinister about so many devouring monsters — like the execution machine in Kafka's *In the Penal Colony*, the poet provided his own rack; if uncertainty, where else were ambiguities so richly exploited? It is not surprising that the Metaphysical manner is basic to current ideas of poetry. Has not Mr Cleanth Brooks attempted to show Metaphysical strains in Corbière and even Yeats? So great a dependence must have led to some misreading.

It is natural, then, that Professor Rosemond Tuve should, in the course of her book on George Herbert, raise questions of wide critical importance. Her aim is simple enough. She wishes to show how deeply Herbert was indebted to the live Christian tradition of his time. His metaphors and strategies are often not, in a naive sense, original; they are drawn from biblical and liturgical sources, from the Good Friday *improperia*, from Books of Hours, breviaries and missals in which such concepts as the identification of the Tree of Knowledge with the Cross, or of Christ with the Grapes of passion and salvation, are constantly referred to not only in text but illustration. (The book itself is liberally illustrated.) What is significant, beyond the limits of scholarship thoroughly and charmingly done, is the degree to which Professor Tuve finds herself in need of explanatory defence. Former critics, though missing most of her points, have at least shown the 'homely' nature of Herbert's imagination, his closeness to vernacular preaching, Bunyan and the ballads. Thus Herbert sees brave Glorie 'puffing by/In silkes that whistle'; he knows what it is like to listen to a sermon when out of grace 'These preachers make/His head to shoot and ache'; and he has the humorous earthiness of Redemption spreading 'The plaster equal to the crime' and Day giving 'new wheels to our disordered clocks'. Professor Tuve, in carrying this cultural relatedness a long step farther, is doing no more than provide the kind of help we need to understand the blood and humours concept behind the last lines of Donne's *Extasie*, or the seed of fire which Vaughan took over from his mystical brother. What worries Professor Tuve is that in her partial disagreement with Empson, whom she chides for misreadings in her long examination of *The Sacrifice*, and with the American New Critics generally, she will be accused of handling things *outside* the poem as an independent structure, and hence committing heresy. She should not be alarmed. Paradoxically enough it is modern research into Elizabethan ideas of nature and the Chain of Being which has rescued the poetry in Shakespeare's plays from the Victorian shibboleths of Bradley. Such approaches must be questions of emphasis and aspect. We have today a sense of the poem as a mysteriously organic structure which organizes experience in a generally dialectic way. This is a valuable point of view, an indispensable one, I think, for the first three or four readings — and one must remember, again with Mr Eliot, how important an element Time can be in an aesthetic experience. The poem must be allowed to expand upon us from the tight core of its independence. When we are fully engaged with it, so to speak, we can profitably allow questions of Professor Tuve's sort to play against our only too incorrigible tendency to make the poem over into something of our own. We can notice changes in the meanings of words just as we begin tentatively to relate one poem to another. Reading poetry, like other kinds of intense living, is dramatic to the point of the metaphorical. We know not what we do because more of us is engaged than the conscious mind can survey. A recognition of fallibility, with some psychological precision if possible, is the healthiest way to approach the bewildering but poignantly fruitful fallibility of the language itself.

Professor Tuve would be the first to admit this, one feels. She tries to be scrupulously fair. If she points out the danger of reading the latest findings of psychology or anthropology into poetry, she readily admits that no one has

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steeped himself more deeply in poems than Mr Empson. Her tolerance becomes perhaps too yielding when, after much persuasive argument on these lines, she opens her second section with the statement that 'we take from his (Herbert's) poetry . . . not chiefly his experience, nor even his meanings for it, but thoughts and feelings which will carry all the meaning our own lives and selves make us capable of relating to them'. This is surely to let subjectivity in again by the back door. But then this second introductory passage, infinitely worth reading as it is, offers more occasion for argument. When metaphors become symbols, and symbols give rise to the problem of belief, Professor Tuve is on more dangerous ground. In what sense did Yeats believe in his symbols and how far do we have to believe in them? What about a willing suspension of disbelief? And how are fixed symbols to be related to the deliberate vagueness of the Symbolist Movement itself, with its devotion to musical values, especially Wagner, and its dependence upon the deliciously hermetic theories of a Mallarmé? Once again, though, Professor Tuve has her finger on the contemporary pulse. A fusion of Symbolist and Metaphysical approaches, heralded by Mr Eliot before 1914, is still at work in some of the poems of Mr Dylan Thomas.

PATRICK ANDERSON

JOSEPH TRENAMAN: *Out of Step, A study of young delinquent soldiers in war time.* Methuen, 21s. 6d. net.

JOHN GITTINS: *Approved School Boys.* H.M.S.O., 4s. net.

Both these books are concerned with numbers of delinquents lived with, observed, examined, and discussed, in institutions set up to solve particular problems. The Special Training Units described by Mr Trenaman were asked to deal with young soldiers who had become misfits in a War-time Army. Mr Gittins has for the past ten years been engaged on the task of finding out what kinds of Approved Schools are needed in order to provide the most suitable training for boys committed by the Courts.

There was an urgency about Mr Trenaman's problem from which Mr Gittins has been free. Though the Staffs of Special Training Units might hope that the Army of the future would profit by their experience, and incorporate similar Units into its permanent organization, their immediate concern was not to change the Army, but the misfits themselves. Mr Gittins had an expectation, if not a firm assurance, that as the result of his researches, the existing Approved Schools would adapt themselves, or be adapted, to what appeared to him the actual needs of the boys coming to them.

The difference between the assignments, and the personalities of the writers, is emphasized in the contrasting styles of the books. Mr Gittins's exposition has for the most part the restraint and objectivity of a Government report, lightened here and there by what the late Philip Guadella once called 'a coy giggle in a footnote', or by a more emphatic 'This is nonsense'. Mr Trenaman, while filling his book with as formidable an array of facts and figures as Mr Gittins, conveys the impression of an earnest young explorer breaking into an uncharted country. Mr Gittins, as reader, might reasonably claim that Mr Trenaman's country is by no means unexplored, that not all the discoveries he has made are new, and that the Special Training Units were the Borstals of the Army, using methods which had been proved effective in these institutions over the course of years. Mr Trenaman, as reader, might feel that Mr Gittins conveys the impression that, in regard to the training of delinquents, we now have all the answers, and that all that is now needed is to sort out the boys into convenient categories, label them, and produce the Schools which fit the labels. The reader to whom neither of these fields is familiar should get from both a great deal of interest and information.

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Mr Gittins offers order and a system in place of the chance variety and implied inadequacy of the Approved Schools as they are at present. Each boy in the future will be carefully examined, placed in his right group, and expeditiously conveyed to his right school. How that school is going to set about curing him of his delinquent tendencies is perhaps outside the scope of Mr Gittins's immediate problem, which is essentially an administrative one of placing boys in schools. It is more evident as a matter of concern in Mr Trenaman's book, which, between its pages of statistics, does reveal a group of people setting out to solve a problem of limited scope, but finding themselves becoming deeply involved, as human beings, with the lives of those with whom this work has brought them into contact.

Some organization is necessary, and great credit is due to those who can devise convenient systems. But when all the testing has been done, and the investigations completed, what will make a bad soldier into a good one, or a delinquent boy into a mature man, is not so much the way his Unit or his school is organized, as the quality of the people he finds there, and their ability to form a vital relationship with him.

It is possible, as Mr Trenaman has done, to isolate twenty-six factors associated with delinquency, but the teacher knows that he is not dealing with factors, but people. He may have met hundreds of delinquents but each one of them will have come to him as something new in his experience. All the time he is having to resist the temptation to regard the newcomer as a type, though similarities in background and personal endowment will always be calling to his mind other boys he has met before. It is not by examining him as a 'case' that the teacher will help the boy, but only by meeting him person to person, as a friend.

So also with Mr Gittins's twelve kinds of Approved Schools. They may provide all that appears materially desirable for the boys they expect to receive, their organization and schemes of training on paper may incorporate all that is educationally sound and praiseworthy, but if those who are to put them into effect are not people of integrity and understanding, and, above all people who have concern for the boys with whom they have chosen to live, the new system will not justify all the reorganization it would entail.

What is most valuable about these books is that they display, in meticulous detail, the stresses and strains under which each of these boys or young men has broken down. These stresses are not peculiar to delinquents, for everyone has his experience of some of them, but it would appear from these investigations that the delinquent has a good deal more than his normal share of sorrows. If this is so it does not fully explain or excuse his anti-social conduct, but it does emphasize the need for understanding and help, rather than condemnation.

M. M. SIMMONS

EDWARD HUGHES: *North Country Life in the Eighteenth Century*. Oxford University Press, 30s. net.

Professor Hughes in this extremely interesting study makes a real contribution to the social history of the eighteenth century. He bases his conclusions on a detailed examination of the letters, account books and papers of the lords of the manors of Gateshead and Whickham — once the richest coal-bearing manors in the country — but he refers to a variety of other sources and supplements his detailed research with a sound and impressive knowledge of eighteenth-century life and literature. The result is a readable blend of 'case history' and general comment. Social history is interpreted in its widest sense, not as history with the politics left out, but as an examination of the life of the community and the different groups — and individuals — who sustained, enriched or on occasion rebelled against it.

The north of England, by which he does not mean Manchester, Leeds and York but Newcastle, Gateshead and Durham, was the centre of one of the oldest

industrial areas in the country; it was also 'on the threshold of a region notorious for its continuing lawlessness and insecurity'. In the early eighteenth century there was already a considerable degree of fusion of landed and merchant interests, and the new northern gentry, emerging a century and a half or more later than in the rest of the country (it would be interesting to learn more of this) reinvigorated their stock and their purses by marrying into local merchant families. Economic prosperity produced a Caucasian spring, 'a sudden blossoming of civilization with the melting away of political and social disorder'. Professor Hughes encourages us to bask contentedly in the early sun, but he reminds us that the northern civilization was founded on a solid economic interest. 'What signifies all your Balls, Ridottos etc.', asked Sir Henry Liddell in 1729, 'unless Navigation and the Coal Trade flourish?'

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It is interesting to read Professor Hughes's account of northern politics in the same period. Election compromises did not ignore local issues or the demands of the coal and shipping interests. It is not clear, however, from Professor Hughes's analysis, what is the answer he gives to his own leading question — how far was

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the 'traditional' Whiggery (*pace* the Jacobites) of the north based on economic interests? It is clear that many of the Whigs of 1715, more strident and assertive than Whigs elsewhere, were men who had garnered the fruits of the 1688 revolution, but in a mass of interesting detail it is not quite clear what happened later. Professor Hughes states the question boldly on page 259, but his chapter does not provide all the answers.

It would be interesting to know more of town life, although there are scattered accounts of great interest. It would be useful too to have a rather more systematic analysis of the extent of social difference between the north and other parts of the country. We learn of children being sent to preparatory schools in distant High Wycombe to correct their language and to improve their accent; and we read of Colonel Cuthbert Ellison's election burdens in 1747 in far-away Shaftesbury. What of landownership? Were the northern estates linked with estates in other parts of the country? And what of marriage? If there was little opportunity for courtship in social circles where much depended on negotiating a legal settlement, were the marriages arranged outside local society? And what were the relations between the north-east and the conventional 'north' which had barely awoken from its slumbers in 1750?

The answers to some of these questions will illuminate the general problem of local difference in national history and how it was eventually blunted. Professor Hughes has made a delightful and important contribution to the changing study of local history. There is no trace in these pages of antiquarianism or parish pump perspectives. The author writes about a world which he knows, but he does not suggest that it is the only world with which he is familiar or the only world which is worth while knowing.

ASA BRIGGS

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